The Life of SIR HENRY SEGRAVE

CAPT. MALCOLM CAMPBELL
and
J. WENTWORTH DAY

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THE LIFE OF SIR HENRY SEGRAVE

Photo *Chas. K. Bowers*

MAJOR SIR HENRY SEGRAVE
WORLD'S SPEED CHAMPION ON LAND AND WATER

Frontispiece]

THE LIFE OF SIR HENRY SEGRAVE

By
CAPTAIN MALCOLM CAMPBELL
AND
J. WENTWORTH DAY
(Acting Editor of the "Field")

With an Introduction by
THE EARL OF COTTENHAM

With 32 Illustrations

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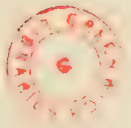

To one

whose Courage has not Faltered—

LADY SEGRAVE

AUTHORS' PREFACE

De Hane Segrave, as he was known to all his friends, was a great man—one of the outstanding figures of a century which has, in its brief life, progressed farther in scientific and mechanical achievements than any like period in the world's history. He embodied the spirit of courage, of adventure, of daring and of modesty. He was all that a boys' man should be—and more than most men's men.

The authors, both of whom knew him intimately, one of us as a rival and colleague on the racing track, the other as a close personal friend who collaborated with him in the writing of his own autobiography, "The Lure of Speed", have written this biography primarily from the boys' point of view. Because of that it will be found to be full of the adventures, the escapes, risks, crises and humours which Segrave packed into his short and phenomenally successful racing career. There is little that is technical or scientific. That important but, to the boy reader, humdrum, side of his life, has been purposely omitted.

None the less it is not suggested or pretended that the hazards and humours which Segrave encountered were in any way peculiar to his career

alone. Any racing motorist of wide experience is bound to run risks, face dangers and meet situations which, to the ordinary citizen, seem hair-raising, but to the racing driver are more or less commonplace.

Segrave's life was full of such incidents. He seemed to attract adventure. And he loved it. Life to him was a thing of zest and quickness, to be played and enjoyed to the full. He lived greatly and died magnificently. He will stand as a hero to the youth, not only of this generation, but of all time.

The authors desire to thank Lady Segrave for her kind supervision of the MS. and for many helpful suggestions; and Mr. Charles W. Segrave, Sir Henry's father, for many stories, anecdotes and photographs, hitherto unknown to the world in general. Mr. Segrave also kindly wrote certain of the passages dealing with Sir Henry's early life and war experiences.

MALCOLM CAMPBELL.

Povey Cross, Surrey.

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61a, Pall Mall, S.W.1.

INTRODUCTION

By Mark Everard Pepys
Sixth Earl of Cottenham

> And over them triumphant Death his dart
> Shook, but delay'd to strike, though oft invok'd.
> —Milton.

Most English people, reading of a motor racing accident in their daily papers, are faintly puzzled, and experience, perhaps, a fleeting sense of impatience. Then the running commentary on the morning's news, passing backwards and forwards in the buses and the business men's trains, probably contains allusions to the latest toll of "this modern craze for speed". Comfortable citizens in the forties and fifties shake their heads, surprised that such young men, with all their lives before them, should throw them away wantonly, and in such a "mad" pursuit. And there, for those busy men and women, the tragedy begins and ends.

Saturday and Sunday come round again, and those same busy folk drive themselves, in hundred thousands, to golf; to play tennis; to visit their friends or relations. Possibly a new car is shown off with pride. One by one its features are described. It is, we are told, a paragon of virtue!

The brakes stop it smoothly, quickly and straight.

Its acceleration enables the proud owner to keep out of harm's way as he goes rapidly from place to place.

Its accessibility saves trouble.

Its efficiency keeps down running expenses.

The low chassis, the careful distribution of weight, and the latest system of springing, are productive of road-holding qualities which set his mind at rest and help him to drive safely in the rain.

The tyres seldom puncture, still less frequently burst.

Such are modern cars in their present state of development. They are safe in the hands of the average motorist who uses careful judgement, and has a pride in driving well.

But how many owners ever stop to think of the men who have tested these things, year by year, in hard races on tracks, and road circuits, which are the laboratories of motoring? That, indeed, is the service which the community receives at the hands of the racing drivers. By their courage, endurance and skill, the theories of designers are proved or disproved without risk to the public.

Motor racing, and in particular road racing, subjects, in one day, every component part of a car to stresses and strains of such severity that they cannot be reproduced artificially except by months of tedious testing.

And the lessons taught by attempts on the world speed record are no less valuable. To conceive and build a body of such a shape that the wind pressure at a speed of two hundred and thirty miles an hour will tend to keep it on the ground, and straight on its course, is no mean feat. Add to it an engine that will attain the speed, a knowledge of mechanics and metallurgy which compels the chassis to play its part, and tyres that can withstand the tremendous forces which tend to rip them off the wheels. Then, perhaps, the ordinary man starts to have some inkling of the scientific data that is accumulated, of which the public is the direct beneficiary.

The same sequence is applied to modes of travel by air, or on the water. Great brains design, brave spirits prove, and the public interest is served. Truly such undertakings need "a heart to resolve, a head to contrive, and a hand to execute".

To this all-important furtherance of transport the late Sir Henry Segrave gave up years of his life, and eventually life itself. He was born on September 22nd, 1896—the year that the legal speed limit in England was raised from four to twelve miles an hour. He died on June 13th, 1930—as we were deciding that the safety of modern cars, largely due to men like himself, rendered a speed limit unnecessary. The world speed records on land and water he left in our

charge. Let us see to it that we keep them—and the air speed record also.

I was with him when he broke a world speed record for the first time at Southport. Lady Segrave and I watched him that morning, doing his lonely sprint, as we had watched him many times before in long distance races against other drivers. Greatly as I admired him, my admiration for her also is profound. If in the course of my long association with him, I was privileged to learn much of cars, of their driving, and of the tactics of racing, by her behaviour I came to appreciate a type of quiet, unobtrusive courage which is beyond all praise.

Never was this more marked than during the Spanish Grand Prix at San Sebastian in 1926. Sir Henry was driving the 4-litre Sunbeam with which he had broken the record at Southport a few weeks earlier. Naturally, it was not by any means an ideal type of car for a road race. Still it was immensely fast, so fast that, without extending it, he broke the record for the Lesarte circuit during the first three practice laps. Being in the mechanic's seat at the time, I knew how much he had in reserve, despite the fact that, at one point, the speed of the car was nearer 140 than 130 miles an hour. But having too much weight in front for road racing, it was far from easy to hold on corners. Of course, he made light of its difficulties to his wife, as was his fashion. All the same, she knew it

was not the right car, and a difficult one to handle on that circuit. The rules allowed no mechanics to be carried in the cars that year, or I had hoped to go with him. So once again Lady Segrave and I watched him together on the day of the race.

After a few laps he failed to come past the tribunes.

The minutes dragged on, and there was no news.

I thought feverishly to suggest trivial causes of delay . . . it was probably only a choked petrol pipe . . . perhaps a tyre had gone, and he was changing a wheel, or coming in slowly on the rim.

Still no news !

We went on talking quietly about possible stoppages, and criticizing the methods of sending news back to the pits from the various sections of the circuit. There was nothing else to do.

After a time, word came back that he was all right. The front axle had broken : but the car had pulled up straight. What Lady Segrave thought, I can only guess. Yet there had been no sign of panic. We had just talked, and talked, and gone on talking. When the news came through, one became conscious again of the people all round; one realized that cars were screaming past; that a loud speaker was giving out their positions in a dull monotone. Life moved on again. But one cannot go through times such as those without

feeling an immense respect for that very gallant lady.

I treasure many memories of her thoughtfulness, and unshakable optimism. Before the 200 Mile Race of 1926, in which I too was driving, she gave us both St. Christopher talismans to wear. A little enough thing in itself. But it was done in such a confident way and with just the right words ; so that the taut, nervous period before the race passed more easily, and one started away with a sense of well-being. Her calm encouragement was the same before the British Grand Prix that year, in which I was reserve driver to the Talbot team that Sir Henry led—a position which proved to be nerve-racking in the extreme although, luckily, my efforts were not required.

If Lady Segrave's sympathy and understanding meant so much to me—only one of many friends —it is easy to understand how essential it was to him. She supervised—ceaselessly, tactfully, unobtrusively—his physical welfare throughout periods of intense office work, or during the anxious weeks that preceded any record attempt. And his mental fitness—every bit as important as his health—owed much to her commonsense as well as to her outlook on life which is so brave and at the same time so *sympathetique*.

Theirs was the priceless possession of mutual understanding—reciprocal and complete. Life

was not always easy for them, any more than it is for any of us. But each gained courage from the other's strength, and their joint gallantry would be difficult to equal. Truly the way is hard for the wives of men who live dangerously. Yet by their courage, their sympathy, and above all by their understanding, the great deeds that their husbands do are rendered greater, and take on an added glory.

Sir Henry Segrave's widow is English, his father is Irish, his late mother American, his friends in nearly every country in the world—for his friends were many. Although his ambition, his endeavour, his record of achievement, the heritage of courage that he leaves, are all national, yet the sorrow of his death, and the honour in which his name is held, we share with many countries.

I have seen some of the letters and messages that Lady Segrave has received from people of many nationalities. They all strike the same note of sympathy in an overwhelming loss ; of grief at the passing of a gallant spirit ; of pride that such a man, for whom they felt a real affection, should have competed with their respective countries in the field of mechanical advance.

What, then, was the secret of that personality which won such universal liking and respect ? It is well that his biography should be written to inspire those who come after and would wear his

mantle. But that is a garment which will not rest lightly on the shoulders. It will slip from the grasp of those whose only incentive is the admiration of the crowd—those for whom the praises of the Press are the *alpha* and *omega* of success. The graceful wearing of that knightly cloak is not for them. It is reserved only for those who appreciate the end in view, the benefit that such work will confer on their country, and on humanity as a whole.

A few weeks ago I detailed some of the qualities of this man's character in these sentences :

"De Hane was never foolhardy. He did not believe in it.

"To accomplish the objects that he set out to attain, he brought his meticulous attention to detail and his able mind, to bear on every point that might affect his chances of success.

"He took the risks that had to be taken, bravely and with his eyes open. But being gifted with great forethought and judgement, he reduced those risks to a minimum, though his personal courage was great.

"Starting at the bottom of the ladder of achievement, he climbed steadily, and with a willing hand to help others. When he reached the top he did not forget those whom he had known at the

bottom, and many were the kind actions that he did unknown to others.

"To every boy he was a hero, and when from time to time it was brought home to him, he was embarrassed. Scarcely ever could he be brought to see that, because of his great name, many people were ready to try and spoil him—to take advantage of him.

"His friends will ever remember a charming personality of infinite courage and whimsical humour, devoted to an ideal—his eyes on the stars."

We have lost our *beau sabreur*. There are others who may follow him. But they have a long way to go, and there is much to learn—not only of driving. To become, as he became, the Ambassador of the British Motor Industry, driving skill alone will not suffice. Although Sir Henry Segrave drove a car and piloted a motor boat with a skill that few could equal, and none excel, those were not his only accomplishments. As a speaker, he was interesting, quiet, sure of his facts, and possessed of a *flair* for foreign languages. He was intensely hard-working, and never satisfied with the extent of his knowledge. And so, being anxious to learn, and willing to do with all his might every task that he set himself, it can truly be said of him that he earned his great success, and undying fame.

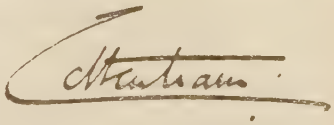
The grace of friendship—mind and heart
Linked with their fellow heart and mind;
The gains of science, gifts of art;
The sense of oneness with our kind;
The thirst to know and understand—
A large and liberal discontent;
These are the goods in life's rich hand,
The things that are more excellent.

—Sir William Watson.

On the last, and successful, attempt at Lake Windermere, on the world's speed record on water, Sir Henry Segrave was fatally injured. A few hours later he died.

Another exceedingly courageous man, Captain Scott, writing of Oates, one of his heroic companions on the South Pole expedition, used some fine simple words that will always be treasured by his countrymen. They can be applied also to Segrave at Windermere, for, without doubt, "we knew it was the act of a brave man, and an English gentleman".

"And thus this man died, leaving his death for an example of a noble courage, and a memorial of virtue, not only unto young men, but unto all his nation."—2 Mac. vi. 31.



Maids Moreton Hall,
Buckinghamshire.

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THE LIFE OF SIR HENRY SEGRAVE

CHAPTER I

Segrave: The Boy Descendant of Vikings—Early Days in Ireland—Motor-Cycling up a Mountain.

When Henry O'Neil de Hane Segrave was killed on Lake Windermere in June, Britain lost one who had done more to enhance her prestige in the worlds of sport and engineering than any other man alive. In a sense he was unique. One had only to meet him to fall under the spell of that quick mind, the swift tongue, the vital energy and brilliant brain that flitted from topic to topic and yet absorbed all it gathered, to realize that here was a man far out of the ordinary. Segrave's whole life was out of the ordinary. Every year of it, from the age of nine upwards, demonstrated the growth of a restless, dynamic, daring personality that was bound to assert itself. He was a born conqueror. Success is as inevitable to some men as failure is to others. Segrave could visualize nothing and no sphere in which life would be

worth living unless one were at the top of the tree.

"There's always room at the top and it's damned crowded down below," he once said, and added: "Why shouldn't one get there? It only needs a little more push and a little more attention to detail than the average fellow is prepared to give."

That remark was typical of the extraordinary duality of his personality. He combined the daredevil with the scientist, courage with caution. When he drove a car he mastered every detail not only of its own mechanism, but of the aero dynamics and pressures of wind and tyres which it was likely to set up. That done, to his own exacting satisfaction, he sat down—and drove. The result was almost always success.

When he died, this tall, fair-haired, blue-eyed young man of thirty-four, with the piercing gaze, the handgrip of steel, the slangy speech and infectious laugh had accomplished all but one of his life's ambitions. Those ambitions were threefold—to be the fastest man on land, water and in the air. The first two were accomplished, the second even at the moment of death. The last was never realized. But it is no secret now to say that he planned to fly a machine in the race for the Schneider Trophy and had even designed an aeroplane of his own.

Had he lived it is likely enough that he would

have eclipsed all those bullet-like speeds in the air with which British airmen have already made the world gasp with wonder.

Speed was his ideal, his doctrine, almost his god. He believed in it implicitly as the great deciding factor in the future of the world's commerce and communication. He believed that only by being first in speed and in the manufacture of engines and machines capable of upholding that position, could Britain recapture or retain the pre-eminence in trade and Empire which she is now in danger of losing.

Whatever this country now owes to speed, it owes largely to the man who was a major with five successful aerial duels to his credit at nineteen and was knighted by his King's own hand only ten years later.

But over and above all his work for that ideal of British pre-eminence in speed, stands the fact that Sir Henry Segrave was one of the finest unofficial ambassadors ever sent out from this country. The full value of his work in promoting good feelings for us in America, in cementing trade and international friendships, in enhancing British prestige and compelling admiration for Britain will never be realized. Certainly he never realized it himself. His own charm and spontaneity was too natural and unaffected for it ever to have been consciously used or capitalized. But

that very charm and spontaneity, added to the breath-taking brilliance of his achievements, made him seem to Americans, Germans, French and Italians alike the beau-ideal of the dashing yet modest young English gentleman adventurer who all down the centuries has continued to make world history—as a matter of course and not as a matter of intent.

He was a modern Drake with the courtesy of a Sydney, the courage of a Grenville.

It is no little thing to reflect, in these days of over-valued democracy, that this amazing young man sprang from a family which is one of the very oldest in Great Britain, for he traced his ancestry in an absolute direct line without a break to Hereward de Segrave, Lord of Segrave in Leicestershire when Domesday Book was compiled in 1080, a family which consistently produced fighters, governors, leaders and great gentlemen. Two centuries before that the "Sjo greve" (literal translation Sea Lord or Viking), son of Harold, a Prince of Denmark, landed on these shores with his longships and harried the land, settling in Leicestershire which became a Danish stronghold. The name being changed to de Segrave in Edward the Confessor's time.

In 1320, Peter de Segrave, the third son of Baron Nicholas de Segrave of Segrave in Leicestershire, was sent to Ireland by King Edward II, as

Curator of his property there, where he settled down, establishing the Irish branch. His son became Chief Baron of the Exchequer in Ireland, and the estates which were acquired by him by Royal Grant in June, 1404, were still owned by the uncle of de Hane in 1912, and were only sold under one of the Irish Land Acts in that year.

So much for de Hane Segrave's pedigree. It is enough to prove that the old principle of "blood will tell" is still true and that not all our ancient greatness of aristocracy has fallen into that decadence from whose effects we are assured that only democracy can save us.

Sir Henry Segrave's father was Mr. Charles W. Segrave, who, being only second son, did not come in for the family estates, but had taken Belle Isle, Lord Avenmore's place, on Lough Derg in the County of Tipperary, on a long lease, where young Segrave was brought up.

There, under the soft skies, amid the high hills of the west, he grew up and learned to love the deep loughs, the bogs and heather, the crow of the cock grouse, the whistle of curlew in the dawn, the sight of white-washed cottages by the reedy lakes, the far high flight of duck and widgeon, the reek of peat-smoke and the everyday life of a country which then was still a sportsman's Elysium.

But horses did not interest him in the least, even in that wonderful horse country where form

and breeding, conformation and stamina are the daily talk of even small boys. Wheels which went round, the faster the better, were the dominant passion of his life. That, one thinks, he inherited from his father who was one of the first of the Irish gentry to buy and drive a motor-car.

From his early youth de Hane was interested in mechanics and mechanical devices and it was no wonder, for attached to Belle Isle was a wonderfully up-to-date garage for those days: lathes, drills, the water supply and various types of machinery being run from the electric-light plant. Garage proprietors for miles around used to request permission to make use of the plant for work they were unable to do at home, which was never refused, so it may be said that he was brought up in an atmosphere of revolving wheels. A toy railway, on an ambitious scale, was a hobby from his childhood.

When he was eleven years old he was given a large room, 25 by 22 feet, for his exclusive use, the floor of which was covered with lines and model trains. Just before his tragic death he had built a house specially to house his model railway which represented an enormous outlay, as everything was made to an exact scale and by the best makers. In it he tried out many new ideas.

He learned to shoot when he was eleven and, like everything he took up, he did it superbly.

He was, until his death, a magnificent shot. On his twelfth birthday he was given his first pair of guns and his first rifle, and Belle Isle, his father's home, being a sportsman's paradise, he made full use of them. Lady Segrave has still several fine mounted stag's heads which he stalked and shot in his thirteenth year.

Under the tutelage of Tommy Flanagan, the keeper, and Jack Whelan, the head-keeper on Lord Clanricarde's estate adjoining, he was taught woodcraft. Both these men seemed to take great delight in teaching him all they knew.

As Belle Isle was surrounded on three sides by water, Lough Derg and the River Shannon, he had the advantage of learning the use of several motor-boats, ranging in size from twenty to forty-five feet in length, and a very fast racing sloop yacht which carried so much sail that it had quite a habit of capsizing. As it was of the skim-dish type with a deep centre-board, it never sank. It had been in races, capsized, been righted and still won. Lough Derg is a very large lake, twenty-four miles long by six miles wide, and the Shannon is the finest waterway in Great Britain. He was a very fine swimmer and at eleven years old could swim half a mile with ease. He had also been taught to swim with all his clothes and boots on.

He was educated at Bilton Grange, Rugby, as

a preparatory school, and went from there to Mr. L. S. R. Byrne's House at Eton, where he stayed until the outbreak of the War, when he went to Sandhurst.

Segrave's first driving lessons on a motor car were on a two-cylinder Argyll in 1905, when he was nine years old. He had difficulty in reaching the pedals and was only allowed to drive on open country roads with someone sitting beside him in case of emergencies, but he drove quite well, and to quote his father, "was inclined to speed!"

The first motor-bicycle which he owned was a four-cylinder Humber which arrived for him on September 10th, 1911, as a present from his father, who left the same day to stay at Glenbride Lodge, in the heart of the Wicklow Mountains, some 106 miles away. Next day the guns were having lunch about 1,500 feet up when a motor-bicycle was seen struggling up the mountainside, over stones and heather, through burns and bogs.

Many were the guesses which were made as to what momentous news was being brought to cause such a journey, and the rider was watched with the keenest interest by guns and beaters alike. Nothing less than a sudden death or a fortune could have brought such an urgent messenger. The betting was six to four on it being a funeral! When the motor-cyclist crested the top it turned out to be the small de Hane who thought

Photo *Esmé Collings*

AT THE AGE OF EIGHT. EVEN THEN HE HAD TO TURN HIS TOY ENGINE UPSIDE DOWN TO SEE HOW THE WORKS FUNCTIONED

that for his first ride, it would be amusing to see how the shooting was going on. After having some lunch he turned round and rode back to Belle Isle, his home—two hundred and twelve miles in one day over atrocious going at the age of fifteen!

The indomitable spirit of the boy is shown by the following example, related by his father.

Very large Army manœuvres were held in Southern Tipperary from September 13th to 19th, 1913, and a neighbour and old schoolfellow of Segrave's father, Colonel William B. Hickie (now General Sir Wm. B. Hickie), had a high command. Segrave went off on his motor-bicycle to see them. Colonel Hickie roped him in as a dispatch-rider and had him put up in the officers' quarters. As a joke they determined to see how much he could stand without giving in and he was kept on the go hour after hour, day after day, until on the last day he was having some food in the Mess when he tumbled off his chair in a dead faint, utterly exhausted, which thoroughly frightened those around him. He was carried to a cot in a profound sleep, but woke up in four hours, very pink and apologetic and anxious to carry on!

This so impressed the G.O.C. that he wrote to the O.C. of the Eton O.T.C. a letter in such high praise of his keenness and endurance that he was made galloper to the Eton O.T.C. in consequence.

And here is another characteristic story. When in August, 1914, War was declared, the Eton O.T.C. were in camp at Tidworth, de Hane being in full rig as galloper to the Corps. The camp was, of course, immediately broken up and the boys sent home. Segrave had a motor-bicycle and started off to Holyhead to cross to Ireland to his home in County Tipperary, still in his O.T.C. uniform. When he got to Llangollen at 5.30 in the afternoon he was told that the boats were not running, so he turned round and rode through the night to Aldershot.

By some extraordinary means he forced his way into the presence of a very highly-placed officer who was busy getting the Expeditionary Force ready for embarkation. He was greeted with: "Hello, Eton, what do you want?" The answer was: "Please, sir, I want to go to France with you!"

When it was found that he was only seventeen he had to be refused, but he got a nomination to Sandhurst from Eton within ten days. His name had been put down for the Irish Guards some years before as he was destined for a military career. But when he got to Sandhurst he was so anxious to get to the Front that every time the papers showed that there had been a big casualty list in some regiment, he would write up to headquarters making that his choice of regiment in the hope

that they would be in such need of officers that they would take him. Eventually, he was appointed to the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Warwicks on December 14th, 1914, as that regiment had suffered terribly a short time before. Exactly one month later to the day he was in the firing line in the trenches.

CHAPTER II

The War, His First Car and His First Aeroplane.

SEGRAVE'S letters home from the Front during the War are remarkably vivid and indicative of his complete disregard for what the normal person would regard as the most hair-raising dangers. Therefore, although we have been swamped with all sorts of War-time letters and reminiscences—many of them imaginary—in the last few years, I propose to give some extracts from de Hane's letters which his father has kindly provided me with. They give a vivid and remarkable picture of war, and an even more remarkable picture of the workings of his mind and its reaction to death and danger.

Letters From the Front

Extract from one of his letters, dated February 9th, 1915, to his father:

"I was walking through . . . a small village quite close here this morning, with Owen, another of our Subs, when those cursed Germans planted a shell not fifty yards away. It threw me flat on my face and bust up ten eggs I was carrying and

which I had had the very greatest trouble and taken the greatest risks in getting. We were looking forward to scrambled eggs as a change from plum and apple jam and bully beef and biscuits, which had been our breakfast, lunch and dinner for days in the trenches. The concussion threw Owen down and when he got up his nose and ears were bleeding. You know there are no inhabitants within a mile or two of the firing lines."

Be it noted that the loss of the eggs was of far greater importance than the near loss of his life.

Here is another letter, dated May 12th, 1915 :

"Quite a lot has happened since I last wrote to you, and I will endeavour to tell you the various happenings in order. First of all we went into the trenches on Friday last for this big attack. We were opposite the village of Aubers. On our right the Indian Divisions and French were attacking. On our left were the rest of the Divisions of the First Army and the Canadians, going up as far as Ypres.

"At Ypres the Germans tried their poison gas and our chaps lay low, the result being that the Germans believed them all dead and advanced towards our trenches, in massed formation. We waited until they got about twenty yards away

and then I turned my machine-guns on them. I don't think one German got back alive. (Segrave at this time commanded a machine-gun section.)

"At Aubers the 7th and 8th Divisions attacked, but the Germans must have got wind of it, because when the 8th Division advanced fresh German reinforcements were hurried up along the communication trenches and into the fire trench. They mowed us down like hay. It was the most awful ghastly murder that the mind can conceive. The 8th Division left 9,000 dead between our lines. We got one line of trenches but only held it for three minutes before every man in it was killed. I myself had most extraordinary luck with my guns; we made use of every bit of cover, and never lost one man. I had a bullet pass along my wrist and go out after passing through about three inches under the skin. The Colonel wanted to have me returned as wounded, but I didn't think it was bad enough, and, when I had tied it up with strips from my shirt, could carry on.

"We have had a pretty hard knock to the regiment and lost an awful lot of officers and men. Then the French were successful at Notre-dame-de-lorette. They advanced three miles along a frontage of six.

"Now we are preparing once more for the greatest battle since this War started. The French are again attacking in the same place with 600,000

men and 4,000 guns. The 7th Division lead the attack on the left of the French supported by 2,000 guns, and the second regiment to advance is mine, the Royal Warwicks. The enemies' trenches are going to be systematically bombarded from 5 a.m. to 9.30 on Saturday morning and then we advance.

"We left Metteren, which is up in the direction of Poperinghe and Ypres, at 9 p.m. and marched to Laventie, stayed there a night and marched straight down to Bethune, where we are now. The French lines join us on the main Lille-La Bassée-Bethune Road, which is only a few miles from here.

"By Jove, I shall sympathize with the Censor if this is, by any chance, opened. I couldn't give you plainer details than these."

Segrave was severely wounded two days later at the Battle of Festubert. He was sent home to Ireland as soon as he was convalescent and it was then that his father gave him his first car, a 30 h.p. two-seater Singer, which gave him excellent service. He rejoined his Division near Aldershot on August 24th, taking it with him.

From there he joined the Flying School at Upavon on October 15th, 1915. He got his pilot's certificate on December 17th, and his wings three days later. On December 21st, he was being

driven by another flying officer who was racing to London, when at a cross-roads they struck another car sideways, smashed it to bits and killed a woman. Those were the days when a flying man's life was equal to about six weeks' purchase and in consequence many of them showed a recklessness in all things which was unbelievable. Their constant racing to London from Netheravon and Upavon was severely commented upon in many of the papers.

On December 24th, three days later, he was driving his own car to Lancashire to visit his father who was staying there for Christmas, when he had an awful smash. His car rolled down an embankment and pinned him under it and his passenger was very badly hurt. Segrave, however, arrived in Lancashire in another car at about 10.30 p.m. When asked what he had done with the passenger, he said he had left him at a private house and phoned for a doctor, and as for the car, that was at the bottom of the embankment still. Like lots of others who had been out at the Front, he just looked on death and disaster as everyday occurrences and scarcely worth mention.

His first flying smash happened on the 15th of January, 1916, at Upavon, but luckily he was not much hurt. While in the air his undercarriage fell off. He could not make out what was wrong with the machine but the people below saw it

and got two doctors, an ambulance and a stretcher ready.

Another aeroplane went up after him and put out a chalked board with the words: "Under-carriage broken, doctors waiting" on it. This cheerful message was just enough to put him on his mettle and he succeeded in landing with only a broken wing and minor damage to the machine, while he was severely shaken.

Everyone who saw it said what a fine feat it was and one which not one in a score of budding pilots could have accomplished.

Here is a quotation from a letter of March 16th, 1916, from the R.F.C., Netheravon:

"I am feeling very miserable and badly need cheering up. To begin with, poor old . . . has just died here. It was the most ghastly accident, some of the control wires in his machine broke in the air and he couldn't keep her nose up. He nose-dived absolutely vertically into the ground at a terrific speed.

"I rushed out and got there first. We had to lift the engine off him, the machine being a pusher with the engine behind. As soon as the machine hit the ground the engine broke loose off its bearers and came straight into his back and drove him right into the ground, breaking his spine and all his ribs. Both arms were absolutely pulverized,

as also were the legs and left thigh. He never regained consciousness, poor devil, and died in about five minutes. He was one of the nicest chaps I've ever met and we were the very greatest of pals.

"Later in the day I also had a smash on the same kind of machine, but was frightfully lucky and escaped with a few bruises and scratches. My smash was due to the fact that I couldn't switch off the engine when landing. There are two switches in case one doesn't work and, by Jingo, neither of them worked! I flew straight into the ground and did in the machine completely, but by the grace of God, didn't do myself in as well. I have been doing a tremendous lot of flying lately."

Writing on April 9th, 1916, from Dover, he says:

"I was attempting to take a machine to St. Omer with a lad named . . . this morning. My engine gave out about five miles out to sea and I just managed to land on the shore. My pal got ten miles out and then fell into the sea and was picked up by a T.B.D.

"It was a tappet rocker and rod came loose on my bus, and whirling round like a flail chewed up the bottom lower plane and propeller. Luckily it

missed me, otherwise blotting-paper would have been needed to pick up my remains."

At this period he was being employed in taking flying machines over to France as he had had much more flying experience than any of the others in the squadron.

Ten days later came a really typical letter:

"Curse these rotten machines the . . . people are turning out, and Gott Strafe the . . . engines. At 9,000 feet over K . . . n, first a control wire broke and then immediately two rocker arms working the overhead valves broke clean in half. The machine immediately nose-dived, but I righted her in time and succeeded in landing without breaking a single thing. I really don't know how we have any flying men left alive at all.

"The German anti-aircraft guns do extraordinarily good shooting, too. I think they must have something new in the way of range-finders. They got two of our squadron last week, but the pilots escaped. However, it's all in the day's work."

This state of affairs, which was nothing short of a national scandal, was again commented on in another letter, dated April 25th, 1916:

"These machines are the most appalling death-traps I have ever come across. Yesterday a chap

called . . . killed himself here just in front of the sheds. He'd only been out one day, poor chap, and just this minute a machine has come down like a stone, the propeller smashed owing to not being properly tested by the makers, with the result that it cut through the tail booms and the tail came right off. The pilot, an awfully nice lad, called . . . , was fearfully knocked about. He died in about five minutes.

"I've been working all day on my engine but can't get it to go at all satisfactorily, so haven't been up, but yesterday I nearly got brought down by a Fokker. I was just behind their lines north of Ypres, and lower than I should have been, when I suddenly saw five or six little streaks of fire pass just in front and to the right of the nacelle, and then I saw a Fokker shoot down past me. He had dived on me from behind and fired, and luckily missed me. He then, after seeing that he had missed, never attempted to turn and fight, but shoved his nose down vertically and went off as hard as he could go. I fired about fifty rounds at him, but couldn't get him.

"The streaks of fire were the tracer bullets the Huns use. It's a hollow bullet apparently filled with magnesium, or some such substance, which burns very brightly and enables you to see the track of the bullet, and so see if you are shooting above or below him. If you get hit with a tracer

it leaves a horrible mess, worse than a dum-dum."

The story of his first successful air duel is briefly told in a letter of April 31st, 1916 :

"I had a fight with a German aeroplane this morning over Ypres. I saw he was going to cross the lines, so I waited for him on this side and about a thousand feet above him. When he came over I dived straight at him and let loose a whole drum of ammunition. The observer was killed stone dead. I saw him fall back in the body of the machine. It started to go down almost at once and I followed it right down and watched it crash close to a small village behind the German lines called, I think, Gheluveldt."

He was very nearly killed on May 2nd, 1916, when he was attacked by three German Fokkers while scouting over the German lines, and it was only because a great friend of his named L. Burden Sanderson saw his difficulty and came to his help that he escaped being shot down. As it was, two of the German machines were shot down instead while the other turned tail and escaped.

By this time the perils of death in mid-air or by being burned alive on the ground had become mere commonplaces to him, as witness the matter-of-factness of a letter written on June 5th, 1916 :

"So sorry I haven't written for ten days, but I've had a smash and I've been backwards and forwards getting the bits, etc.

"I was chasing a Hun and we had gone about thirty miles south of here. We had both been firing at each other and I think one of his shots must have gone through the armature of the mag. Anyhow, the engine cut dead out.

"I was about 10,000 feet up, and seeing an aerodrome about six miles away, thought I could just glide in, and I would have done, but just this side of it there was a road with poplar trees alongside and just before I glided over the trees I got the devil of a bump which must have dropped me forty feet at least; anyhow I hit one of the trees full belt. It took away the upper and lower planes on the right-hand side and I fell on to the road with quite a thud.

"I think I was fairly lucky as I only got scratched and shaken. My poor old machine was completely done in, though, it was just a heap of wreckage. Poor old bus, she was the best in the squadron both for speed and climb and we'd been in nine fights together and she'd done her duty nobly."

Three days later he wrote to say that he had got his new machine, and that "she's a brute. She tries to take charge of one in the air. She's not

trued up at all, the planes are all twisted, and everything, including the engine, is all wrong, but I'm working hard with the mechanics to get her into some sort of shape."

Eighteen days later he wrote an exultant account of a duel with a German pilot, in which he achieved a speed of over 100 m.p.h. :

"I had quite a strafe the other day. I saw a Bosche being fired at by A.A. guns and I was between him and the lines, so I aimed to cut him off from his own lines. As soon as he saw I was doing this he made straight for his own side. We were at about 13,000 feet each and going dead head-on to each other. He opened fire from his forward gun at about 300 yards and poured a stream of lead at me. I waited till I was about 80 yards off and banged off a whole drum into him and dived under him about twenty feet.

"He was going like stink, nose down, and his observer was firing at me over the tail plane with the second gun. I chased him to the lines at a speed of about 103 m.p.h. showing on the pilot tube. Whether I succeeded in getting them or not I don't know, but I scarcely see how I could have missed him at such close range. We are having the devil's own lot of casualties, I'm the only Flight-Commander left in my squadron."

This was followed by a letter written on July 3rd, 1916, in which, with complete detachment of mind, he says :

"We have lost 75 per cent. of the pilots who went on bombing raids during the last few days, but it's quite worth it considering what we have accomplished.

"The Huns have now got a new kind of shell for firing the machines. It bursts into flame and spreads to about 100 square feet and stays floating in the air blazing for about 30 seconds. The heat is simply devilish, it burns the fabric off the planes like butter and then down you come."

The inevitable happened the next day, July 4th, 1916. He was flying an F.E.8 machine at 7,000 to 8,000 feet when he got a direct hit by an anti-aircraft shell. The machine fell slowly, the shell having smashed his engine control and rudder wires. It turned upside down and broke its fall by landing on its wing and side. Segrave was hanging upside down by his belt. Some Belgian peasants tried to get him loose but could not as the new belts were of steel and webbing, so they went for some soldiers who used their wire-cutters and cut him loose.

Four days later he arrived at the London Hospital, Whitechapel Road, where it was found that

AT THE AGE OF TWENTY, IN FLYING KIT,
SEPTEMBER, 1916

he had six bones broken in his left leg, a knock on the head and a stomach injury.

On April 20th, 1917, Doctor Robert Jones, the famous surgeon, performed an operation on his foot to save amputation. It was successful, though he had to remove several bones, and the foot was ever afterwards supported and held together by silver plates.

Each Medical Board which had examined the foot since the flying accident on July 4th, 1916, had recommended that it be taken off, that it would never be of any use, and that as he grew older it would give him much pain and trouble, but Doctor Robert Jones performed a miracle, and though Segrave limped slightly when he was very tired or the weather was damp, yet he was little handicapped later when he came to perform all those deeds for which he was so famous afterwards.

This finished his active fighting at the Front as, after he was convalescent, he could get no Medical Board to pass him fit, though he kept trying first one and then another. It was a little later that he got on the Staff and did such excellent work right up to the Armistice.

According to his War Office dossier, he shot down five enemy aeroplanes in single fights during the three months he was flying at the Front.

By the beginning of October, 1916, Segrave was back in Ireland convalescing, where he used his

father's motor-car so much that he was sent over to London and told to buy one and send his father the bill. The latter fondly imagined that something about ten or twelve horse power would be bought.

Next day a telegram arrived from London asking his father to meet the London and North Western cargo boat at the North Wall, Dublin, as the car would be on board, and to drive it to the Royal Irish Automobile Club. Mr. Segrave went down and was horrified to see an enormous machine being brought ashore. It had big exhaust pipes on either side of the bonnet, a main exhaust the size of a drain-pipe and a compression which took two men to pull over. It was a 120 horse-power Itala, the largest car which had ever been in Ireland! The father left it on the dock. He would not face driving it through Dublin.

When young Segrave arrived back that evening his father asked him: "What made you buy a thing like that?" The answer was: "But, Dad, it was the biggest I could find,"—with a pained expression on his face as if fault was being found that he had not got a larger one still.

Even with this monstrous "consolation" for his wounds, Segrave found it impossible to rest and recuperate, but felt he must be at work, helping in some way, while the War was on. So he induced Colonel Carr-Ellison, who was stationed in Dublin

on some big job, to make him his secretary without pay. After that he was to be found in his office from morning until night, working hard, until he received an appointment as Staff-Captain to the General Staff of the R.F.C. in London, on December 19th, 1916.

His rise in administrative work was swift. He was appointed Staff-Captain at R.F.C. Headquarters in London on December 19th, 1916, and in the following May was sent to Flying Headquarters in France. This was followed in August, 1917, by the important appointment of Private Secretary to the Chief of the Air Staff.

The following letter was received by him from his Chief, Sir Henry Norman, when he ceased being his private secretary.

April 30th, 1918.

"My dear Segrave,

"I am now severing my official connection with the Air Ministry and I wish, therefore, to send you an assurance of my appreciation of your services to me as private secretary while I have been a member of the Air Council.

"Your personal work and industry have been beyond praise. Every call I have made upon you for help or information has been met with the utmost efficiency and promptitude. There seems no aspect of the air service with which you are

not intimately acquainted. Your technical knowledge is exact and extensive. Your splendid personal record of War service, and your remarkable experience of flying almost every type of machine enable you to speak with unusual authority upon questions arising to-day.

"Please accept my warmest thanks, and if ever I can be of use to you in the future, do not hesitate to call upon me for any help in my power to give.

"Always sincerely yours,

"(Signed) Henry Norman."

Almost immediately after he was appointed Technical Secretary to the Air Council, and although not yet twenty-two years of age, he was chosen soon after for the still more onerous job of second in command of the special Aviation Mission to America, being attached to the British Embassy in Washington.

He was married on the 4th of October, 1917, a few days after he was twenty-one, to Miss Doris Mary Stocker, and it turned out to be the happiest marriage in the world. She was the best wife that any man could have and to the day of his death, thirteen years later, they were absolutely bound up in each other.

He, his wife and a bulldog, to whom he was devoted, sailed for the United States on June 18th, 1918. The bulldog, by the way, had to be sent

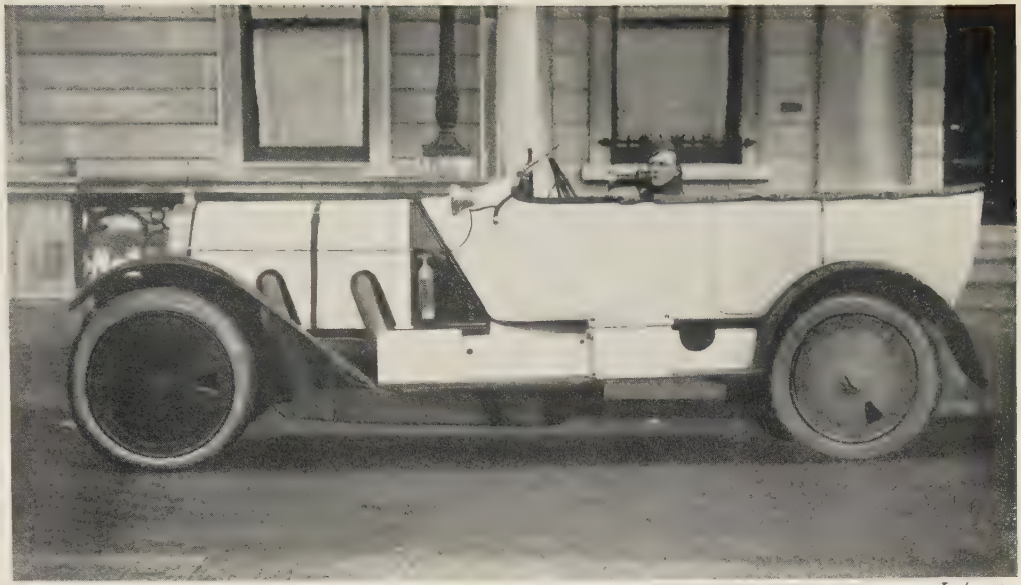

Photo *Lafayette*

AT THE AGE OF TWENTY, IN HIS FIRST BIG CAR, THE 120 H P *ITALA*

in one of the tramp steamers. Its fare and the cost of an attendant was nearly double that of Mrs. Segrave!

They were on the *Empress of Britain*, the Canadian Pacific liner, and one of a large convoy of ships bound for Halifax, Nova Scotia, guarded by cruisers and destroyers as it was at the height of the submarine warfare. The boat was packed, chiefly with Canadians. It was their first chance of returning to their own country since the beginning of the War, and the majority of them were women and children.

They left from Liverpool, and the first thing that struck the passengers was the lavishness of the food after the restrictions and meat tickets in force in England, the ship having brought her stores from Canada.

The pace was slow, as it was governed by the speed of the slowest ship, and the course a zig-zagging one all the time. No lights of any sort were allowed, not even smoking on deck after dark, and discipline was of the strictest.

Off the north of Ireland, at 4 p.m. one afternoon, while Mrs. Segrave was lying down in her cabin, and Segrave was playing patience at her side, there was a general alarm: "Submarine attack, boat stations." Everyone rushed on deck, putting on lifebelts, and took up their proper stations by the boats.

The *City of Poona*, a steamer of about 10,000

tons, was steaming abeam, about two hundred yards distant, when there was a terrific roar as a torpedo struck her. She immediately heeled over at such an angle that it was impossible to lower the boats from either side. She sank in twenty-three minutes and very few were saved. When the water reached the boilers there was a tremendous explosion and water and loose gear was thrown to an enormous height. The bursting of the torpedo shook the *Empress of Britain* from bow to stern.

The cruisers and destroyers were darting about, dropping depth charges, and later it was claimed that they destroyed one submarine.

While in America his great knowledge on all questions of aviation was recognized on every side and he was again and again especially mentioned in dispatches.

His determination was undefeatable. When he wanted anything he got it, by diplomacy, by argument, or by sheer strength of character. His personality carried him through everything. The following is a good example.

When the Armistice was declared on November 12th, 1918, the members of the Aviation Mission wanted to get home, but shipping was very scarce, and women were not allowed to travel on the Atlantic lines, the import of motor cars was forbidden, and dogs from foreign countries were not

admitted to this country under any conditions. Yet Segrave, then twenty-two years of age, arrived smiling from the States exactly one month after, with his wife, a large American motor car, and his wife's pet bulldog! How he did it no one could learn. When he was asked, he just laughed in that way he had when he was treating anything difficult as rather a good joke, and said: "It's quite easy when you know how."

A short time after his return he made his first essay into the business world. He and two other youngsters started a motor-business with disastrous results financially, at least as far as he was concerned. Things went wrong from the beginning. Cars were fluctuating in price in an amazing manner, spares were nearly impossible to procure, the after-the-War product was terribly bad. In about nine months he found that he was out of pocket some four thousand pounds. He said he had learned a good lesson at a high cost, but that it was probably worth it.

His great friend K. Lee Guinness then took him on at the K.L.G. Sparking Plug Works in a responsible job and he remained there during his earlier motor-racing career.

CHAPTER III

His First Racing Car—"The Greatest Thrill of My Life."

SEGRAVE once remarked: "The greatest thrill of my life was when I went round Brooklands at eighty-five miles an hour. That decided me to give up everything else and take to motor-racing. It was the first time I had ever been on a track."

It was typical of him that as he had lived by speed during the War, so he determined to live for speed during the peace. No mere humdrum way of earning a living in the comfortable security of an office would have suited his adventurous spirit. And he had to earn a living. His total resources, with the responsibility of a wife and home to maintain, were only a few thousand pounds.

He spent eighteen hundred of this on buying a second-hand racing car, a big white Opel, one of the principal makes of German racing cars. The car had been driven by Joerns in the Grand Prix of 1914, in which it had finished eighth. Curiously enough, its last appearance in public had been on August Bank Holiday, 1914, when it had appeared at Brooklands and thrilled the

crowd of thousands of onlookers as one of the most modern cars of its day.

This was in 1920. He drove it at Brooklands fairly consistently all that year and succeeded in winning a number of races. His success was not only remarkable for the fact that he was a complete beginner, but also because, since he could not afford a mechanic, he had to do all the tuning up himself. Not content with this grimy donkey-work, he was constantly fiddling about with the engine and introducing minor alterations and modifications to suit his own ideas.

This car was purchased as a direct result of an amusing conversation which Segrave had several months previously with Mr. Louis Coatalen, the brilliant designer of the Sunbeam Motor Car Company. Segrave had gone to Mr. Coatalen and told him with all the assurance in the world that he wished to be taken into the Sunbeam team of racing drivers, then the foremost British racing team in the world. Mr. Coatalen was not having any. He had been pestered by too many young men who wished to break their own necks and ruin the company's cars at the company's expense.

He said, in effect: "Go away. Buy yourself a car, show me that you can win races with it and then come back and talk about it again."

Segrave proceeded to do so. For six months

or more he consistently badgered Mr. Coatalen to give him the big chance. Mr. Coatalen fobbed him off by telling him that although he seemed to be fairly good as a track driver, he had had no experience in road races.

This was true. Road races are the most gruelling test to which any motor car can be put. They mean hour after hour of constant driving at top speeds over every sort and condition of road, through villages and towns, up hills and down dales, round hairpin bends and over bottle-neck bridges, constantly exposing driver and car to risks which the smooth and even surface of a racing track can never provide.

Much more of this type of racing is done on the Continent than in Britain. The principal road races in Britain are run in Ireland, where the authorities do not look upon them with the unfavourable eye of England.

However, Segrave was not discouraged. Finally Mr. Coatalen promised to let him drive one of the Sunbeam cars in the French Grand Prix which was to be run the following year, that is 1921. Segrave always said that Mr. Coatalen remarked to him: "If you pay all your own expenses and also pay for any damage you do, I will lend you the car." And he used to add, laughingly, that he thought Mr. Coatalen did it only to get rid of him.

Seven English cars were entered for the big race, four of which were to be driven by men whose fame as racing drivers was of the very highest order. These formidable rivals were Mr. K. Lee Guinness, Count Zborowski, Rene Thomas and André Boillot. Thomas and Boillot were driving Sunbeams. Count Zborowski was driving a Darracq, while Lee Guinness and Segrave were given Talbots made in the Sunbeam factory on Sunbeam lines.

The race was run at Le Mans, upon a circuit which had never been used before. It was a fairly easy route to follow as there were no really dangerous corners and the roads were fairly wide. But this was offset by the fact that the road surfaces were weak. Before long they were cut up in a terrifying manner and strewn with loose stones which shot out from under the wheels like bullets. These stones were no small danger. A driver following close on the tail of another car stood a good chance of being blinded or even killed by the stones shot at him from the back wheels of the car in front. More than one serious accident has resulted from this sort of thing in the big road races.

Segrave had to change no less than fourteen tyres during the race. This means more in practice than it may seem in print. A racing driver whose tyre suddenly bursts or is punctured has to leap

out of his car, jack up the wheel, change the tyre and be off again all in a matter of seconds.

That was not the worst of it. While his car was travelling at high speed on a straight stretch of road the car in front of him, driven by a well-known racing motorist called Jimmy Murphy, picked up a stone and shot it out like a shell. It went clean through the wire mesh stone-guard in front of Segrave's face, cut through the moulded steel scoop, hit the steering wheel and then struck Segrave's mechanic, Moriceau, in the head. Moriceau was badly cut and knocked almost senseless.

This was a most serious handicap as no racing driver in such a race is able to do his best without the aid of a mechanic and Moriceau was one of the best. He had distinguished himself earlier in the race by repairing a hole in the oil tank which was so bad that Mr. Coatalen said that nothing could be done to remedy it.

The hole was caused by a stone picked up by one of the front wheels of the car and thrown backwards. Moriceau, nothing daunted by Mr. Coatalen's remark, pushed a large piece of cotton waste into the hole and then corked it up by hammering the edges of the tank on to the waste. It was a clever thing to do but highly risky, for if any odd piece of cotton waste had got into the oil circulating system it might easily have stopped

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SEGRAVE AT BOULOGNE, MUD-SPATTERED AFTER VICTORY

the lubrication of an important part and caused the engine to seize up.

It is not surprising that with all these difficulties to contend with Segrave finished seventh. He was just behind Lee Guinness who had had to change no less than nine tyres.

Segrave said afterwards that one of the most efficient pieces of quick work he ever saw performed on a race track was done during that race by Guinness and his mechanic. A stone from another car had shot away the cap of their filter. Instead of giving up, they stopped by the wayside, chopped a small branch off a tree, cut a section of wood out of it and then whittled it down until they had formed a home-made cork to plug up the hole!

During this race Segrave showed no sign of nerves or fear, although it was the first time that he had ever driven in such an event. His coolness and courage coupled with his natural skill in driving and the astonishingly quick resource which he showed in the face of continual accidents, so impressed Mr. Coatalen that when, three months later, another great road race, the Coupe des Voiturettes, was run on the same course, he was given another Talbot car to drive. This good luck was partly due to the fact that Boillot had been badly hurt during a road race in Belgium a few weeks before. That accident is worth telling

because it shows the appalling risks to which drivers in a road race are constantly subjected.

It happened during a race known as the Spa Hill Climb. Boillot was almost due to start when a man who was the agent for Talbot cars in that district asked him to take as a passenger a stranger who was a good customer of the firm and was expected to buy a car. Boillot, like most racing drivers, objected to having passengers in his car. However, he was finally persuaded to do so. His mechanic, Ledu, got out and the stranger took his place. This saved Ledu's life.

The car started in a storm of rain on a road made of granite on which there was a corner with an asphalt surface. Boillot reached this corner at a very high speed, suddenly realized that the surface was as slippery as ice and jammed on his brakes. His front wheels locked, the car skidded off the road like a rocket and crashed straight into a tree. The passenger was killed instantly. Poor Boillot himself was so badly injured that his face was permanently disfigured for life.

Naturally, these circumstances did not help to prepare Segrave's nerves for his next great road race. On top of it all, he was put through a constant series of short runs in his car and made to understand that he could not have things all his own way. No doubt it was useful discipline but

the result on his highly sensitive, keyed-up nature was to put him into a state of suppressed jumpiness.

During one of his practice runs he shot over the top of a slight hill and was horrified to see straight in front of him a wagon loaded high with logs of wood. He promptly trod on everything within reach and pulled the car up with a screech of brakes only a few yards from certain death. The result was that he saved his life but badly damaged some of the internal mechanism of the car.

Finally the great day came. Twenty-three cars were lined up for the race which was to be three hundred miles in length. "Every detail of the car rose up in front of me as I stood there waiting for the final order which would make the long line of white-clad drivers race to their cars, leap in and start up their engines," he said afterwards. "My mind raced over every detail of the engine. In those few brief moments it seemed ten to one that half of them would go wrong!"

His luck, however, was in. He had been ordered to drive strictly to schedule, that is to say, to hang on the tail of Guinness's car and not to pass it unless it was forced to stop. Guinness, for his part, was ordered to follow Thomas, the other Talbot driver. The result was complete success for Mr. Coatalen's organization. The three cars finished first, second and third, Guinness being

only a minute behind Thomas, while Segrave was half a minute later than Guinness.

By this result the Sunbeam firm, who owned the Talbot cars, had made motor racing history for the second time on record. For only once before had a team of one make of light car finished first, second and third. That had been at Dieppe in 1913, when the Sunbeams had done so.

One month later Segrave was chosen to take part in the most important long distance motor race that had been run in England since the War ended. This was the first two hundred mile race ever organized by the Junior Car Club at Brooklands. The team in which Segrave drove consisted of himself, Mr. Lee Guinness and Captain Malcolm Campbell. Forty cars started for the race. They were lined up in ranks fourteen and sixteen abreast, and when they started the noise was like a battery of machine-guns going off.

Most of them broke down from various causes but the Talbot team ran true to type and finished first, second and third with Segrave in the lead followed by Guinness and Campbell. It was Segrave's first important win and he achieved it by finishing on a flat tyre, a bare three seconds in front of Guinness. He punctured his tyre just before the final lap but refused to stop to change it. Captain Campbell lost a tyre half-way through the race but Guinness ran non-stop.

THE TALBOT DARRACQ TEAM, 1921

Left to right: K. Lee Guinness & A. Divo; Malcolm Campbell & Ledu; H. O. D. Segrave & Moriceau

When it is borne in mind that the average speed achieved was 88.2 m.p.h., it will be seen that Segrave had learnt a lot in the few months in which, from being a mere novice, he had risen to be worthy of the first rank of racing motorists.

CHAPTER IV

The Secret of Segrave's Success—Driving By "Feel"—Beheaded By a Tyre—A Race of Tragedy and Comedy.

BEFORE telling the story of the rest of Segrave's career, it is worth while emphasizing the points which make a really great racing-motorist. It is useless for any boy to think, simply because he can drive his father's car at a higher speed than his father would approve of, that he is therefore cut out by nature to make a second Segrave.

Segrave never drove fast unless he knew that the car was under his control. He was an "instinctive" driver and an instinctive driver is one of the rarest things in the world. He used to say himself that there are times when a man is travelling at very high speeds when his whole body seems to go numb and his hands and feet refuse to obey the commands of his brain.

Every racing driver knows these lapses. They may only last a second but each second will mean sixty yards of road surface flying under the wheels of his car. Instinct alone will keep the car straight at such a time.

Segrave, like all successful drivers, drove by

"feel". Like the perfect horseman, he and his mount were part of an harmonious whole, the one working completely with the other. The ordinary type of mechanical driver is governed all the time by the fact that his driving depends on his mechanical knowledge. He knows that if he pushes a lever in a certain direction the car will respond in a certain manner. But that sort of driving never gets very far. Its processes are too slow.

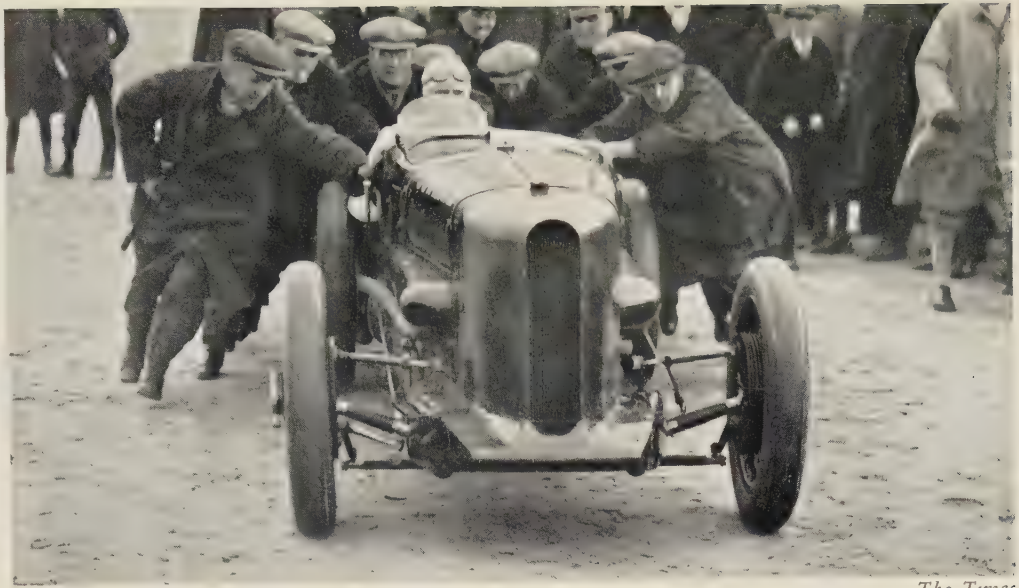
Half the art of driving a racing car is to know that at a certain number of revolutions per minute your engine has a life of so many hours during which it will continue to develop a certain output of horse-power. If you force the revolutions over that limit you imperil the engine. It may break some important part at any minute. The born driver reaches his ideal number of revolutions and then proceeds to keep his car as far as possible running at the top speed of which it is safely capable. It is easier to do so on a track than on a road where you are constantly taking bends and corners, hills and village streets. To do that and maintain any consistency of speed means lightning changes of gear, with the car travelling at anything from 30 to 120 m.p.h.

Segrave had this instinctive sympathy with his engine, this instinctive "feel" for speed, coupled with a quickness of brain and rapidity of thought which was almost superhuman. He could drive

at speeds which made onlookers catch their breath with amazement. When, at the zenith of his fame, his gigantic thousand horse-power car, the Golden Arrow, flashed over the sands at Daytona, at the unheard-of speed of 231 m.p.h., it was nothing more than a roaring blur, a dazzling, breath-taking projectile on wheels, so swift that not one pair of eyes among the thousands of onlookers who lined the track would even see the features of the man who drove it. Yet that man sat at the wheel as cool as ice.

The training and experience which helped Segrave to achieve this marvellous unanimity of courage, coolness, quick thought and instinctive judgement were built up and developed in the few brief, brilliant years of his racing career which began with the events we have recorded and ended only eight years later, when the giant motor boat, Miss England II, plunged to her death in the waters of Lake Windermere, taking with her the man who had conquered speed on land and water and had snatched a new world's record for England at the very moment of his death.

Segrave studied every detail of his car and equipment. He paid as much attention to the purely scientific aspects of motor racing as he did to the mechanical details of the cars he drove. He studied wind pressures, tyre pressures and aero-dynamics with the intensity of a scientist.



Photc *The Times*

STARTING FOR THE RECORD AT SOUTHPORT

He knew as much about the tensile strength of metals as some of the cleverest metallurgists alive. Shortly before his death, he lectured to an entirely technical audience on this very subject and held them enthralled for nearly two hours, speaking practically without any notes at all. Yet only a few years before he had been ignorant even of the barest elements of the subject.

As for any scientific education, in the usual sense of the word, he had received none whatever.

One of the subjects which engaged his attention most constantly was that of tyres. The speed of a car is governed by its tyres. The engine may be able to generate any amount of horse-power which will drive the car at record speed, but it is no use attempting to make those records unless it is quite certain that the tyres will stand up to it. The most frequent cause of tyre trouble with racing cars is that known as "flinging" a tread. This means that the tread, which is the raised part of the middle of the tyre, is thrown off owing to the fact that the constant friction on the road surface has melted the compound which glues this rubber tread to the cord part of the tyre. When this happens there is nothing to do but pull up, unless you are unlucky enough to skid, in which case you may be stopped by a tree or the nearest wall.

Other frequent causes are, of course, punctures and bursts. Burst tyres are nightmares to the

ordinary motorist but it is astonishing how frequently racing cars burst their tyres and yet escape serious damage. Nevertheless, many accidents have been caused by bursts.

Probably the most amazing accident that ever occurred with a tyre on any race track in the world happened only a few years ago during a road race in France. As we have explained these road races are run through towns and villages. The onlookers gather in thousands at various vantage points and sometimes crowd out on to the very road itself. In this particular race a large car was travelling at well over eighty miles an hour. They were racing down a straight stretch both sides of which were lined by dense masses of spectators.

Suddenly, a hundred yards or so ahead, a spectator in the front rank bent down to tie his shoelace. At the same moment the spare wheel of the car broke loose, hit the road and bounded forward in front of the car. It struck the man and beheaded him like a knife.

To return to the subject of tyres. Those built for racing cars are usually tested on a special wheel which revolves them at a considerably higher speed than they are expected to reach on the road. If the tyre can stand so severe a test, it can usually be taken safely for granted that other tyres made from the same material will stand up

to a less strain. Segrave was always most particular about the testing of the tyres which were to be fitted to any car he had to drive at a really high speed, and he often worked out beforehand, for his own instruction, the amount of pressure which a certain consistency of material would be likely to stand.

He had already begun to study these and similar abstruse subjects connected with his new profession when, in 1922, he was given the chance to take part in the last great Tourist Trophy race for motor cars run in the Isle of Man. It was the only one he ever took part in. That particular race nowadays is run in Ireland, which is perhaps better from the point of view of the spectators, as Ireland is more convenient and easier to reach than the Isle of Man.

The Isle of Man circuit was difficult and mountainous, and there were not a large number of entries for the race, which covered a thirty-seven miles course up one side of Snae Fell Mountain and down the other. The Sunbeam team consisted of Segrave, Lee Guinness and a well-known French driver named Chassagne.

Heavy rain fell an hour or two before the start, with the result that, when the cars started, the lower parts of the roads were like lakes and the drivers were racing in sheets of upflung water. In spite of this and the fact that he started fourth, Segrave

passed three cars in the first lap at an average speed of sixty miles per hour, which is not perhaps to be wondered at, as, only a day or two before, during a practice run, he had covered three laps in the astonishing time of thirty-five minutes mean average each lap.

Segrave was leading with Chassagne for lap after lap during the first part of the race, but unfortunately when he looked like winning comfortably, his car broke down and came to a standstill. Nothing could be done about it and Chassagne won. The make and break of Segrave's magneto had come loose when within two miles of the winning post, and just when he was cresting the last hill. Had he been able to push the car to the top of the hill, which he tried to do, he could have rolled in a winner under the car's own impetus, as he had such a long lead.

We spoke earlier of the speed at which the mechanic of a racing car can change a wheel. Segrave said that actually during this race his own mechanic, a Frenchman named Paul Dutoit, who he always said was one of the strongest men he had ever met, changed the wheel of his car and poured twenty-eight gallons of petrol into his tank in *thirty-two seconds*! It seems impossible but Segrave always said that he believed this was the record time for a combined wheel change and "fill-up".

It must be remembered that this time was checked from the moment when the car drove up to its marked square in front of its "pit", to when it left the square on the other side of it. During that time both the driver and mechanic had to stop the engine, dismount, do their work, get on board again, restart the engine and move off. There is no time at such a moment for even one wasted movement, word, or gesture. Everything has to be scientifically thought out beforehand and, in fact, these changes are practised before races so that when the actual moment comes every second of time shall be utilized. This practice is done against a stop-watch, and it is repeated till both the driver and mechanic are what we may describe as "speed-perfect".

No wonder it is often said that nearly all big motor races are won or lost at the pits. Even half a minute's waste of time at the pits can mean a loss of fifteen laps of a ten mile circuit in a five hundred miles race. If your rival is just that half-minute ahead, although he may be two seconds slower over the ten mile lap he can afford to take his corners with more care and with an actual margin of safety which is denied to you. This shows how even the loss of a few seconds can seriously increase the risk of accident in a race.

Segrave realized the vital importance of swift pit work from the moment he started to race, and

he and his mechanics were usually the quickest combination in the many races in which they took part.

The Isle of Man T.T. Race was followed by the Grand Prix at Strasbourg in Alsace-Lorraine. This race was run over a triangular course which had to be covered sixty times to make a total of five hundred miles. It was one of the most thrilling races ever run and from some points of view, one of the most amusing, although Segrave cannot have found it so, for all the Sunbeam cars broke down. His was the last to go.

What Segrave described as one of the funniest incidents of his career happened before the race on the way to Strasbourg from Paris. He was ahead of Lee Guinness by about four miles, both of them doing about a 100 miles an hour. Right ahead lay a clear straight stretch, on which he opened out and let the car really go.

At the end of the straight he swung round a corner and was amazed to see a long straggling village sprawling ahead of him. It had been hidden by the hedges and he was into it before he knew where he was. For a second he wondered what on earth to do. By the time he had finished wondering he was through the village, roaring along at over 100 miles an hour, out at the other end and over the brow of a hill.

All he saw as he flashed through was a

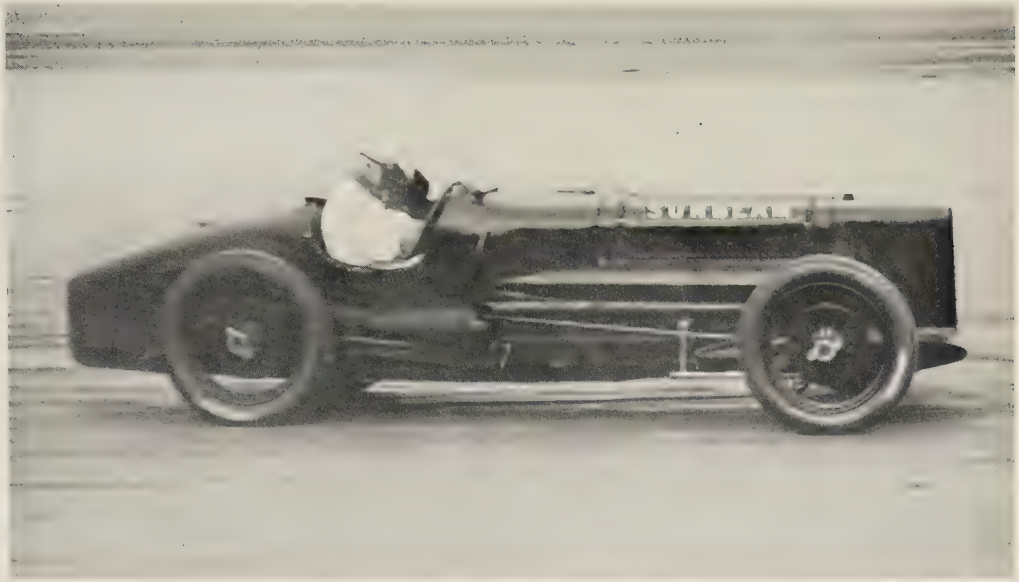


Photo *The Times*

THE 12-CYLINDER, 300 H.P. CAR AT SOUTHPORT, TRAVELLING AT 130 M.P.H. WITH THE DRIVER'S HANDS OFF THE WHEEL

kaleidoscope of houses and fleeing people and a blur of blue as the local *gendarmerie* poured screeching and yelling out of the "*poste*", or local police station. Over the hill he stopped, got out and stalked cautiously back by the hedge side to the brow of the hill to see what would happen to Lee Guinness. Half the population was gathered gesticulating in the street, screaming as only Frenchmen can, and wondering what sort of a thunderbolt had disturbed their rural peace.

Suddenly the roar of Guinness's open exhaust smote on their ears.

"*Nom de Diable*! Here was another of those *sales voitures*, those cursed racing-motorists!"

Quick as thought the street emptied, the *gendarmerie* poured back into the police station, the peasants rushed to the inn and their houses—and the next moment every house seemed to erupt men with bicycles!

These they proceeded to lay across the road, a long line of eighteen or twenty bicycles, then they all scuttled back to cover like rabbits. The street was deserted, silent.

A second later Lee Guinness shot round the corner, saw the bicycles, gasped with horror, trod on every conceivable thing in the car and pulled up with a screech of tyres about a yard from the barricade.

Instantly every house poured forth gendarmes,

poilus, peasants, mayors—there seemed to be a lot of mayors—and women, who screamed, gibbered and cursed, while the fiercest of the lot invited Guinness in thunderous tones to "Come and be arrested". Meanwhile, the rest excitedly piled all the bicycles against the bonnet of his car. It was exactly like a scene from a comic opera.

Lee Guinness did the only thing possible. He pretended to understand no French, stared solemnly at the gesticulating *maire* and quietly produced a map, which he unfolded.

"*Où est la route à Strasbourg?*" he inquired in an atrocious accent. His unruffled calm was too much for the *maire* and the gendarmes. They seized on this new issue, and all screamed together. There were three roads to Strasbourg at that point, as Guinness well knew, and the crowd divided into three camps on the subject. One yelled directions for one way and the other two for the alternative routes. Lee Guinness had judged Gallic psychology very well.

Suddenly as they were all gesticulating anew he backed the car, the bicycles fell down, the crowd sprang back, and Guinness shot round to one side of the "barricade" and was out of the village like a flash.

That was not the only amusing incident, for when they arrived at Strasbourg on the morning of the race, they found the approaches to the

start packed with cars and people. They turned down a side street to avoid them and were at once stopped by a gendarme who refused to let them pass. It was useless to tell him that they were actually entered for the race. He refused to believe them. Every spitting, snorting little car in the city had a number painted on it and an open exhaust, and half the drivers seemed to have told the police that they were competitors. The gendarme was no more inclined to believe them than any of the others.

In the midst of it all, as they were still arguing, there arrived a mounted policeman, who backed his horse into the crowd and demanded to know what all the fuss was about.

Things looked black when suddenly they had an inspiration. They opened their exhausts which let out a deafening roar, the horse went up on his hind legs, the police rushed to pull him down on all fours again, the crowd opened out and they got away.

It was rather a risky thing to do and Segrave said later that he fully expected a bullet in the back, for the French gendarme does not hesitate to fire at you if he gets a little excited.

Just before that race a friend of Segrave's, an Italian named Julio Mazetti, a member of one of the oldest families in his country and the idol of Florence, betted that he would go round a certain

right-angled corner at seventy-five miles an hour. Segrave and others betted that he could not. He said he would and he did—and crashed into the wall of an inn, finishing up in the bar with bricks and mortar raining down about him and the bonnet of his car peering into the kitchen beyond. He was not hurt!

Segrave did not finish at all in that race owing to a breakdown. This was a blessing in disguise for half-way round, while his mechanic was filling up with petrol, he spilled some on the seat and left a great puddle where Segrave had to sit. Segrave would not waste time in mopping it up but jumped in and sat in it.

Soon afterwards he was in agony. The petrol burned all the skin off his flesh and left him raw and bleeding. Petrol burns are far worse than fire burns because they go so much deeper. They eat into the very flesh itself.

The race was finally won by a driver called Felice Nazzaro, whose nephew, Biaggio, was killed in a most terrible fashion. He was travelling all out down the fastest section of the circuit and had only about ten miles to go when suddenly either his front or his back axle—no one ever found out which—snapped clean in half.

The car hurtled end over end along the middle of the road with a horrible crunching noise, and crashed straight into a tree, a tangled mass of

twisted metal that had once been an engineer's dream and had cost £6,000 to build. Both driver and mechanic were killed instantly.

In fact, the whole race was a mixture of tragedy, discomfort, accidents and humour. To start with, various government and municipal officials who were expected to be at the opening of the race turned up a quarter of an hour late and were greeted with a storm of cat-calls and sarcastic remarks from one of the largest crowds that had ever assembled to watch motor racing in Europe.

All the roads along the circuit were covered with a greasy mud which had been left from heavy rainfalls during the night, and when the cars actually started the drivers found that instead of being given a concerted signal, they had to trundle along behind an official motorist at a very low speed until suddenly, without warning, he turned down a side road. It was then a case of "put your foot down and go all out".

One incident which happened before this race shows the meticulous, almost finicky, care which Segrave bestowed on every detail of his car. It had not been painted too well and in addition was covered with oil marks, scratches and bruises. This annoyed him so much that he had the entire body taken off and carried right across the frontier by lorry into Germany, where it was re-painted all over at his own cost. Naturally, this did not

make it run any better but, as he said afterwards, when chaffed about it: "It soothed my nerves. Even if it doesn't go it *looks* good, anyway."

His spare car was completely ruined just before the race by an accident which nearly resulted in Segrave and his mechanic being burnt alive. He suddenly heard the engine give a "pouf", stopped and told his mechanic to flood the carburettor.

He opened the bonnet and a pillar of flames ten feet high shot up. The petrol had overflowed into the under-pan of the car, being ignited by the blow-back, and for ten miles they had been sitting above a mass of flames without knowing it. Segrave at once scrambled out of the car and he and the mechanic seized handfuls of earth and sand, flung them on to the car and dug frantically for more with their fingers, scrabbling with their hands in the ditch at the side of the road.

The car was by then a mass of flames and villagers came rushing up with pails of water which they threw over it. That cracked all the cylinder jackets and the car became a total wreck.

This Grand Prix was notable for the fact that two or three of the veterans of the early days of motor racing came back to their own and took part in it.

The manager of a French company who had entered a team of three cars, decided that he would

Photo *L.N.A.*

BEFORE THE START OF THE SIX HOURS' RACE AT BROOKLANDS. MAJOR AND MRS. SEGRAVE

give the modern type of racing driver a miss for once and go back to the great men of 1900 who had set up wonderful records on the old enormous cars of those days, which were like dreadnoughts to look at and needed giants to drive them.

So Hemery, Wagner and Guyot were enrolled and shown the cars they were to drive. Segrave said at the time that he was sorry for them but could not help being amused. The contrast between the type of motor car which they had driven in their own heyday and that with which they were then confronted, was astonishing. No man could be expected to change from one to the other without experiencing a shock.

The old type of racing car was heavy, enormous and simple. It was built on dreadnought lines, and little short of high explosive would wreck it. You drove it more by sheer muscular strength than anything else. It was like riding a medieval charger instead of a modern racehorse.

The modern racing car, on the contrary, is light, flexible, intricate and relatively frail. It is as complicated as a chronometer, as sensitive almost as a living being. You drive it by caresses instead of coercion.

It is easy, therefore, to understand the difficulties with which these old-time drivers were confronted. The results, in one case, were amusing.

Hemery was an enormous fellow, 6ft. 4ins. in

height, with the strength of an ox, the appearance of a mountain bandit, but a very charming man.

He started off on a practice run the day before the race, disappeared round the first corner hanging on the wheel as though it was the tiller of a ship in a heavy sea, and reappeared a few minutes later walking back along the track with a face like thunder.

"Where is the car ?" Segrave asked.

"Ah ! Bah ! Ze car !" he replied. "She is dead ! Finish ! I leave her stiff by the road, *cette sacré voiture* !"

Round the corner Segrave found the car, standing by the roadside, its change-gear lever completely wrenched out "by the roots". The whole interior of the car looked as though a bull had charged it.

Hemery, it appeared, had shot round the corner, and pulled on the gear lever to change speed with all his might, with the result that, like the parlour-maid, "it broke in his hand".

This was not the end of his misfortunes, for when all had been put right he started off again, approached a sharp corner, heaved on the steering wheel like a capstan, and collapsed in his seat—with the entire wheel in his hand !

The car missed the corner, charged the barricade, plunged into a potato-field, and overturned. Hemery was thrown clear and picked himself up, with the wheel still in his hand.

For a full minute he stood like a man in a trance, his eyes glaring at the wheel, and then, with a mighty Gallic oath, he whirled it round his head, flung it far out into the potatoes, and stalked back to the pits.

Later, he spent half an hour in the potatoes looking for the wheel!

Finally, in the race itself, he ran his car up a tree, and so finished, unhurt, but firmly convinced that modern racing cars were fit only for women to drive.

It must not be imagined, however, that the old time drivers were in any way inferior to the present generation. They were marvellous fellows, most of them as brave as lions, willing to take any risk and doing all the hard and dangerous work that the pioneers have always undertaken in the history of any hazardous enterprise.

Not many people nowadays remember the terrible "Race of Death" of 1903, as the French still call the great road race from Paris to Madrid in which so many drivers were killed or injured and so many cars wrecked that the French Government ordered the race to be stopped at Bordeaux.

Yet in that race a driver called Gabriel set up a record which for pluck and endurance will probably never be equalled. His car was a 70 h.p. monster which vibrated like a machine-gun, ran on unspeakable tyres, had no detachable wheels or rims,

rear-wheel brakes only and controls which needed the strength of a super-man to use them.

Gabriel started one hundred and sixty-eighth and finished first with an average of more than 65 m.p.h. for the 342 miles!

He passed 167 cars on the way, many of them in flames or ruins. Dead men were lying beside some of them and in others dead men were being roasted by the flames. There were wounded in the ditches and other injured being carried away on stretchers. Yet Gabriel drove past all these nerve-wrecking horrors with a courage and determination which took no heed of the fact that he himself was almost certain to share a similar fate at any moment of the journey.

On many stretches of road he drove through clouds of dust so dense and blinding that it was impossible to see two yards ahead. His only guides to the direction of the road were the tops of the trees high above the rolling clouds of dust. Car after car plunged off the invisible roads and either crashed into the trees or burst into flames in the ditch. Driver after driver was killed, yet Gabriel finished first and averaged sixty-five miles an hour.

That achievement will always stand as one of the most heroic in the whole tragic history of motor racing.

CHAPTER V

A Marvellous Escape From Death—The Sea, Bloaters and Bilge Water—Racing with the Car on Fire—Lost in the Mountains.

To return to Segrave and his exploits of 1922. The Grand Prix at Strasbourg was followed by another 200 miles race at Brooklands, in which occurred one of the most remarkable accidents in the history of motor racing.

Chassagne was just about to finish his forty-third lap when an outside back tyre suddenly went flat on the banking at the far end of the railway straight, which many readers will know from having seen it. The car instantly skidded and shot over the top of the track, upside down, and crashed into a dense thicket of bushes, fifteen feet below the other side of the bank. Neither Chassagne nor Dutoit, who was acting as his mechanic, were hurt. But immediately after the race was over Dutoit went up in an aeroplane and looped the loop over Brooklands so as to give himself a new sensation and take his mind off his narrow shave!

Another odd thing about this accident, which is frequently noticed in similar cases, is that when

a driver is thrown clean out of the car, as Chassagne was, his shoes are torn off his feet by hitting the steering wheel as he leaves the car.

Segrave was about a quarter of a mile away when the accident happened and did not see it, but when he passed the spot he was amazed to see a pair of shoes lying neatly side by side on the middle of the banking. He said afterwards that he was puzzling all through the rest of the race as to how on earth that pair of shoes had contrived to get there.

By this time Segrave had firmly established himself as one of the leading drivers of the day, but he had not yet actually achieved that outstanding position which was to be his later on. Soon after, however, he took part in the speed championships of Britain which were run for at Brooklands, where he managed to win both the 2-litre championship and the 5-litre championship, each time on a Sunbeam car. In the last race he achieved the fastest time of the day for a distance of five and a half miles, namely 105.58 m.p.h.

That year's racing ended with the Penya Rhin meeting at Barcelona in Spain and the great Coppa Florio race in Sicily which is run through bandit-infested mountains. Segrave went out to Spain on a yacht belonging to a friend and he always used to say afterwards that the voyage across the Bay of Biscay was one of the most terrifying

episodes of his life. He was not particularly fond of the sea at any time, although he loved speed boats and was a marvellous swimmer. On this occasion the Bay was very rough and the yacht had a stormy and tempestuous crossing.

Segrave felt worse and worse as each hour went by. The climax came when he was asked to go down into the hold to investigate a peculiar knocking noise which sounded as though one of the cars stored in the hold had broken loose. He crawled down there more dead than alive and after hunting about the floor of the garage in the hold, discovered that the noise was being caused by a box of Yarmouth bloaters which had broken loose and was banging against the side of the ship. It had already burst and the bloaters were bobbing up and down in the bilge water.

The combined smells of bilge and bloaters were beyond description. Segrave made one dash for the nearest car, inhaled all the petrol fumes he could to remind him of land and fled upstairs to the deck and the open air. He said that after that no power on earth would have forced him down into the hold again.

This storm was scarcely over before they ran into another off the coast of Portugal. Segrave was lying on a sofa in the depths of misery, with his mechanic lying groaning and writhing on the floor beside him, when suddenly the yacht was hit

broadside by a mountainous wave. The sofa broke loose from the bolts which clamped it to the floor and Segrave was thrown on top of his wretched mechanic, while at the same moment a sea of water poured down the companion-way into the cabin. The cabin was flooded two inches deep in water, but both Segrave and his mechanic were too wretched to care whether it was two inches or two feet. They just lay there.

They finally arrived at Barcelona without any mishap other than the damage done to their peace of mind and body.

Segrave had hardly started in the race before his car began to run badly, and before long the engine caught alight on a corner and both he and Moriceau, his mechanic, were driving with the engine practically enveloped in flames. Moriceau hung his legs out of the side of the car and so avoided the terrific heat which was scorching the floorboards.

Segrave had to continue driving with his feet down. He could only do so for a few minutes and then the soles of his shoes began to scorch until finally they were burnt right off. He pulled up at the pits to fill up with petrol and cool his feet and was lamenting his luck, when Mr. Coatalen coolly said : "That's all right, Segrave ! When you are burnt again just get out and put your feet in a puddle !"

Apropos of this incident, he said one day that he believed that the fastest mile of his racing career was done, not in Florida, but one day on a straight road at Nonancourt near Paris. A sheet of flame suddenly shot out of the back of the car. He was sitting above the tank of his car, which contained thirty or forty gallons of petrol, and he knew that if he slackened speed in the slightest it would all run forward into the car and he would catch alight. As it was, the petrol was pouring out at the back and running down the road behind in sheets of flame.

"I do not know what speed we did with that tongue of flames shooting out at the back, but I am certain that the car never went so fast before or since," he said afterwards. "Luckily we had a straight road."

The Spanish race was followed by the great Coppa Florio race in Sicily, which, as we have said, is run through steep and mountainous country in parts of which brigands and snow-drifts are equally common. This race is over a circuit 68 miles in length and there are said to be no less than 1,600 bends and corners to it. The altitudes vary from dead sea level to 3,500 feet in the mountains and some of the road surfaces are so terribly bad that an ordinary touring car is obliged to go almost at walking pace.

Segrave knew little or nothing of the appalling

difficulties which he had to face, which is why he was so unwise as to start on his first practice run round the course at three o'clock one forbidding November afternoon. He thought he could get round and back again in little more than an hour.

Before they had gone far the clouds opened and torrents of rain fell, while pitch darkness descended. There were no lamps of any sort on the car, so Moriceau was obliged to get out and walk in front, while Segrave kept the car crawling behind him, following the white blur of his overalls through the rain and darkness.

After what seemed like hours of crawling through the dark, up steep hills and over dreadful roads, they arrived at a wretched village which consisted of a few hovels, grouped round a filthy inn, from which issued a score or more of ferocious-looking men who regarded Segrave and his mechanic with the deepest suspicion.

Neither of them could speak more than a few words of Italian—although later on Segrave picked up the language with that remarkable facility which he always possessed. In any case, their few words of good Italian were useless in Sicily, where the peasants speak a *patois* intelligible to few but themselves.

Eventually, after much gesticulation, Segrave made it clear that all that he and his mechanic

required was a bed for the night. No one would give them one. Finally, however, after much argument they were led, wet and hungry, to a barn which was scarcely watertight, and were given to understand by signs that they could sleep on the hay.

Next morning when they woke they were presented with the bill. Neither could understand the total, but that made little difference for they discovered to their horror that neither had any money. This was explained to the landlord and transformed him into a human firework. He stamped, raged, swore, gesticulated and threatened, until he had collected a crowd of villagers, all of whom joined in the general dog-fight. It was made abundantly clear that unless Segrave paid up, both he and his motor car would be detained by force. It was a bad moment.

Moriceau suddenly had a brain wave. Searching frantically through the many pockets of his clothes, he suddenly produced a railway cloakroom ticket and waved it in the air while he announced, with the utmost emphasis and an air of outraged dignity, that it was a French note of great value, and rather than argue about such a despicable sum as the bill for their night's bed on the hay, he would present the landlord with the note and refuse to accept any change.

Whether this beautiful speech was fully under-

stood or not is most doubtful, but the fact that the "note" possessed a certain value appeared to sink in. The landlord snatched at it, stuffed it into his pocket and signified that they might depart. They left quickly!

The race itself was packed with incident, risks and danger. More than a third of it consisted of a steep hill climb, twenty-six miles in length. Segrave's lubricating system on his car was not equal to the strain thus set up, and the result was that they had continual delays and stoppages. When they were not stopping they were being bumped and bounced about from potholes to ruts and back again on to loose stones until every tooth in their heads seemed likely to fall out.

This was not all. Suddenly they crashed into a pothole worse than any they had yet met and emerged with a split radiator. They had to get out and hammer the edges of the split together with a stone and a spanner as best they could, but the result did not altogether stop the leak.

Poor Moriceau therefore had to endure the additional discomfort throughout the rest of the race of cuddling a three gallon keg of water between his knees, so that they could stop and fill up when the radiator was running dry.

That did not last long. They were going all out up a hill, along a road which skirted a precipice, when the car suddenly struck a culvert which

crossed the road. There was a terrific bump. Moriceau and his keg of water were shot into the air like two peas out of a pop-gun. Moriceau bounced back into the car but the keg shot over the precipice and rolled down the rocks. They had to get out and climb slowly and painfully after it. When they discovered it, they found that it had fallen on its cork and driven it in so tightly that no force could extract it! Luckily they had just enough water left to reach the pit in safety.

The first lap of the race was barely half-way through when Segrave noticed a column of smoke rising from the roadside ahead of him round the bend. He shot round the bend and was horrified to see a car lying overturned with a dead man lying in the road. He pulled up with a screech of brakes and he and Moriceau jumped out and dragged the body to the roadside. Then they had to push the car some yards as part of it was sticking out on to the road. The dead man turned out to be the mechanic accompanying a driver named Meregalli, who had attempted to take the corner at much too high a speed and had crashed. Meregalli himself was not killed.

It is indicative of the cold-bloodedness of the Sicilian character that the dead man was left lying by the roadside all the rest of the day. Every time the other competitors passed the spot on the laps of the race they could see the poor corpse

lying a few yards from the road with its arms flung out, and its eyes staring up at the sky.

At each of the villages the populace insisted on crowding out into the middle of the road as soon as one car had passed, in order to see the next one coming. The amazing thing about it was that they were not mowed down right and left. By half-way through the race there were only six cars left in it. The rest had been obliged to retire either from breakdowns or other accidents. More than one had gone clean off the road and finished up among the rocks.

Segrave eventually finished second, having achieved an average speed of 32.5 m.p.h., which was remarkable, considering the appalling state of the road and the manifold risks which had to be faced.

CHAPTER VI

His First Great Victory—A Win for England in the French Grand Prix.

THE following year, 1923, was a milestone in Segrave's life. For the first time in history England won the Grand Prix of France, the greatest road race in the world, the blue ribbon of motoring. The race was held at Tours and the distance was, as usual, 500 miles. The circuit is through marvellous scenery over roads which are ideal for high speeds and, given good weather, the course is probably the best in Europe.

Segrave, with his usual attention to detail, spent the entire fortnight before this great race in continual practice, concentrating particularly on fast corner work and high speed repairs. Dutoit, who was to act as his mechanic in the race, was one of the best he ever had and the two of them spent hours each day practising wheel-changes, repairs, filling-up and so on, timing each other with a stop-watch and continually seeking means by which they could save a second here and a second there.

Segrave himself used to go out with a stop-watch and clock other drivers on the corners during their practice work. He would then

analyse their time, compare them with his own and think up new ways of beating them.

After much thought he decided that instead of sticking to the usual rule of starting fast and finishing slow, he would start slow and finish by going all out. He mentioned this idea to Mr. Coatalen who, although he looked rather doubtful, by this time had so much respect for Segrave's judgement and commonsense that he let him go ahead in his own way.

Segrave was staying at Chartres before the race and got up early one morning and by two-thirty a.m. was in his car and on the road to Tours, where he intended starting practice round the course before anyone else was out of bed.

"I wanted to get there quick," he said laughingly afterwards, "so we opened her out and did 100 miles an hour along the straight *route Nationale*. It was barely dawn and nobody was about, but rabbits and game were all over the place. I did not realize there was so much game in France until we reached Tours, then when I got out and looked at the bonnet I found we had collected about a dozen rabbits, a pheasant and a chicken! Bits of fur and feather were stuck all over the front of the car till it looked like a game dealer's shop."

An enormous crowd gathered to watch the start of the race. A long line of cars was drawn up, with the white-clad drivers and mechanics sitting keyed

Photo *Wheeler, Folkestone*

DRIVING THE ENGINE OF CAPT. HOWEY'S MINIATURE RAILWAY AT LITTLESTONE DURING THE BANK HOLIDAY "RUSH" HOUR

up for the signal to start. The moment it was given each man dashed for his car, started up and was away.

Tragedy occurred in the first lap. Vizcaya, driving a Bugatti that looked more like a tank than a motor car, started full of ardour and enthusiasm. He took his first corner at the village of La Membrolle at about 100 miles an hour, trod so hard on his brakes that the control broke and he cut a telegraph pole in half, charged the barricade and mowed a lane through the spectators, killing three and wounding eleven.

It was a terrible scene, yet so excited were the crowd that some of them started to hurl abuse at the police for not clearing the human debris away quickly enough, so that they could get back into their places to see the race.

Segrave himself began badly, for his clutch slipped in the first lap and lap after lap the car lost speed. He actually stopped it half-way through the race and consulted with Dutoit as to whether it would not be wiser to retire altogether rather than risk damaging the car seriously.

Luckily they decided to continue. Still more luckily a metal stop which had been the cause of the trouble suddenly snapped off, the clutch went in with a bang and Segrave found himself more than half-way through the race with a car which was in far better condition than anyone

else's because it had not been driven at high speed and was therefore not overstrained. There were still seventy miles to go, but the Fiat team of cars had by this time gained so considerable a lead that Segrave gave up all hope of winning, although there seemed just a chance that he might finish second or third if he went all out.

He settled down to drive hard and had barely done so before two of the Fiat drivers dropped out of the race leaving their third companion, Carlo Salamano, in the lead followed closely by Divo in second place on another Sunbeam similar to that which Segrave was driving.

Segrave was soon signalled from the Sunbeam control station to tell him that he was lying third, hard on Divo's tail. From this moment the race took on a new aspect. Divo had to stop to fill up with petrol, oil and water, and realizing that Segrave was catching him up lost his head and made a fatal mistake. Instead of unscrewing the cap of his petrol tank he started to screw it on even more tightly. He struggled furiously with it for half a minute and then suddenly realized that instead of unscrewing it he had been forcing it on. In a panic he tried to unscrew it. It was too late, the cap had jammed.

Every second meant ground lost. He and his mechanic Moriceau, who had so often driven with Segrave, nearly went mad in their endeavours

to get the cap off. They even tried to cut through the solid brass with a cold chisel. That failed. Finally they had the mortification of seeing Segrave's car roar past them, hot in pursuit of Salamano, who was flying miles ahead at a terrific speed. Even so, it is doubtful if Segrave would have won had not the Fiat pit staff made a tactical error at that very moment.

Salamano was driving his low red car at a speed which would not only have won the race, but gave him just enough petrol in hand to finish. The pit staff, however, lost their heads and, seeing Segrave creeping up on him, signalled wildly for him to go all out. Salamano did. The result was that he ran out of petrol and his car stopped just a mile short of the grand-stands. There remained only twenty-seven miles to be covered for him to win and Segrave was still some miles behind.

Salamano's mechanic leaped out of the car and ran like a hare to the pit. Meanwhile the crowd in the grand-stands and round about, which numbered about a hundred thousand people, was in a state of terrific excitement. The red car had not passed them and wild rumours of a terrible accident were flying about. The panting mechanic explained to the pit staff what had happened. Immediately there was a panic to find bicycles and one was handed to the mechanic who climbed puffing and panting on to it with a tin of petrol in his

hand and started the bicycle back to the stranded car.

This was another mistake. The rules of the Grand Prix lay it down that all work done to the cars during the race must be carried out by the crews of those cars without outside help of any kind. It is also laid down that all supplies of oil, petrol and water must be supplied from the pits. The pit marshal, therefore, no sooner saw the mechanic mount his bicycle than he ordered him to get off and return to his car with the petrol on foot.

This move created an uproar. Bedlam broke loose. The crowd of a hundred thousand Frenchmen, Italians, Germans, Spaniards and others, many of whom had not the faintest idea of motor racing rules, broke into a storm of boos, hisses, cat-calls and threats. Salamano had been heavily backed to win and they saw their money going. The scene was beyond description.

Meanwhile, Segrave, miles down the road and out of sight or sound of all this hubbub, was driving for all he knew, striving to finish a good second but with no hope of winning. Suddenly he flashed over the brow of the hill at 116 miles an hour and there saw just ahead of him a low red, tank-like car lying stranded by the roadside. For one wild moment he thought it must be Salamano. As quickly he put the thought out of his head. It was too ridiculous to hope for such a thing.

As he flashed by the car, he did not even glance at it, so convinced was he that Salamano was still miles in front of him, but Dutoit saw the number on the stranded car and forming a funnel with both his hands he bellowed into Segrave's ear: "It's number 14 broken down. We are leading."

There were twenty-seven miles left to go and Segrave said that of those twenty-seven, at least seventeen were covered with his mechanic looking backwards over the tail of the car, lest someone should appear at the last moment to wrest victory from them. A few minutes later the big Sunbeam flashed over the finishing line and Segrave had won the Grand Prix of France, the first English entry to finish higher than fifth for the greatest and most difficult road race in the world.

He was given a tremendous reception in the square of the city which was packed with motor cars and dense masses of cheering people, with the band playing "God Save the King", enormous bouquets being handed up to him and the French Minister of the Interior shaking him warmly by the hand.

Two amusing incidents happened in connection with this race, one during and the other immediately after it. In the race itself Segrave and another English driver were following hard on the heels of Prince de Cystria, an Italian amateur, who was driving one of the tank-like Bugattis.

All three were passing through the village of La Membrolle where the streets were far too narrow to allow the Englishmen to pass the Italian. Other cars were following close behind them, so in order to hint to de Cystria that he should buck up a bit Segrave's companion accelerated his engine violently two or three times, producing a rasping roar.

De Cystria looked wildly round, saw two enormous cars charging down on him, lost his head, swerved frantically and charged headlong into the palisades by the roadside. As Segrave flashed by, he saw the tail of de Cystria's car sticking pathetically out of the debris, while planks, poles and match-boarding rained down on the driver's head. No one was seriously hurt.

The second amusing incident happened just after the race. While the populace was packing the square and cheering Segrave who stood on the hotel balcony bowing his thanks, a Frenchman rushed up to one of his mechanics—an excellent little Swiss with a broad sense of humour—and offered him a bucket full of champagne ! He, with a calm acceptance of all the dangers it implied, drank the bucket off.

He promptly faded out from all further interest in life, and was carried off the field of battle, feet foremost. His Swiss resilience soon asserted itself and, struggling bravely to his feet, he marched

A VIEW OF SEGRAVE'S MINIATURE RAILWAY, WHICH WAS THE PRINCIPAL HOBBY OF HIS LIFE. HE SPENT HUNDREDS OF POUNDS ON IT AND HOURS WORKING OUT MECHANICAL IMPROVEMENTS

off into the town in complete racing kit and announced to the populace that he was "Le Major Segrave".

All the young women and old ladies of the town promptly lionized him. For five days Segrave saw no more of his faithful mechanic. During that time the little Swiss was making hay while the sun shone. He enjoyed every form of hospitality which the ingenious nature of Frenchmen can provide. For four days he was king. On the fifth he turned up in Paris and reported himself to Segrave, very green, very ill, very pale, most apologetic.

In the same year Segrave took part in the Boillot Cup Race at Boulogne in which he witnessed three of the most extraordinary incidents that had ever happened during a road race. The first was the beheading by a spare tyre of a spectator, which we have already mentioned, the second happened a few minutes afterwards on a corner some way farther on.

There again, the crowd had pressed too far forward on the track and a woman stood at the apex of the crowd on the corner. Segrave shot round, tried to avoid her and missed her by six inches, but her skirt blew out and caught the hub of his wheel.

The next second she was standing on the corner in red flannel "plus fours", while the shreds of

her skirt were sticking to his car, a mile away.

A little farther on, as he was approaching a corner, he saw people rushing about waving and yelling, screaming and pointing. The track there passed through a pine wood and Segrave thought that another car had crashed among the trees, which were lined with onlookers.

Round the corner he shot and was amazed to see an enormous red deer stag charging down the road at him. The car must have seemed like a prehistoric nightmare to the stag for he turned and fled down the road like lightning, with the car roaring behind him. Suddenly he "jinked" to one side, as the pig-stickers say, and charged the crowd. He hit the wire fence at about thirty miles an hour, bounced back on to the track like a cricket ball and then, with one magnificent leap, cleared fence, crowd and all, and disappeared into the forest.

There was a mad Frenchman at that meeting who, before every race, turned and bowed and scraped to the crowd before starting, then got into his car with a series of flourishes and started off at top speed with a terrific explosion.

He did this once too often, and unfortunately started off in reverse. There was a deafening roar from the engine, the car shot backwards at about forty miles an hour, crashed into the

cement barricade and smashed the tail part to atoms.

Before we leave Segrave's racing history of 1923, it is perhaps worth while recording two incidents which he always quoted as showing the gruelling nature of the course at Tours and the hardships with which the mechanics had to put up.

In the first place it must always be remembered that a mechanic who rides in a racing car which is being driven at high speed, stands a very good chance of being thrown out if he does not hold on tight enough. Usually the strain is so great during a race of that length that a driver will change his mechanic at least twice. Divo actually did so but Segrave's mechanic, Dutoit, stuck it out.

When he finally alighted after the race was over, it was found that the flesh on his right shoulder had been cut through almost to the bone, owing to the fact that he had wedged his shoulder against a steel girder in the car in order to prevent himself being thrown out when cornering at terrific speeds.

In the same race the clutch began to slip on Lee Guinness's car, so his English mechanic, Perkins, wrapped a piece of wire round the pedal and held on to it like grim death for dozens of miles, while the car was travelling at 110 miles an hour, bumping and jolting indescribably. The end of the wire cut his hand almost to the

bone, so he took off his tie and fastened that to the pedal instead. This meant that he had to lean forward with his head exposed to the terrific wind pressure which such high speeds set up. He almost fainted, and had to be replaced by a fresh mechanic.

CHAPTER VII

The Grand Prix at Lyons—Assaulting the Police—The Girl and the Lamp-post—Lee Guinness nearly killed

The Grand Prix d'Europe, held at Lyons in 1924, was the first of three great and eventful races in which Segrave took part that year. The circuit was tricky, full of corners with one bad hill, a twisty stretch with a two hundred foot precipice on one side of it, and another steep declivity by the roadside at the bottom of which was a reservoir.

Well over a hundred thousand people assembled for the race which was policed by two regiments of soldiers and two thousand gendarmes. One can obtain some idea of the immense crowds who flocked to see it when it is remembered that there were sixteen thousand cars in one stretch of car park alone at Lyons that year.

Practice runs were held each morning from five o'clock to 8 a.m. during which time the roads were closed to all other traffic. Naturally, everyone wanted to get off at top speed so as to establish a lead and so get a chance of really seeing what their cars could do. The inevitable result was

that they all arrived at the first village on the road in a cloud of dust.

This village was called Givors and was notable for the fact that it contained a right-angled corner on which a lamp standard stood sentinel. The road was barricaded by wooden palings all the way and no one was supposed to be allowed on it. On the other side of the palings eighty feet below the level of the road lay a deep reservoir.

One morning a very beautiful young French girl somehow slipped past the gendarmes and planted herself at the foot of the lamp standard to watch the cars go by. Just behind her through the palings lay the reservoir.

That morning an excitable German named Friedrich had the lead. He came charging into the village at about 100 miles an hour, saw the vision of beauty leaning gracefully against the lamp-post, gaped foolishly, put his foot on the accelerator to show off and charged lamp-post, girl and palings at well over a hundred miles an hour! There was a deafening crash, the lamp-post was uprooted and wrapped round the car, the girl sailed over the palings in a wonderful parabola and dropped like a stone into the reservoir eighty feet below. Gradually the dust subsided.

When Segrave arrived on the scene the German was trying frantically to straighten his front axle with the cross-piece of the lamp-post which had

broken off, while, eighty feet below, a wet and bedraggled girl was climbing painfully out of the reservoir. She was quite unhurt, except for bruises, and so was Friedrich. But one regrets to record that he had most ungallantly lost all further interest in her. He was concerned only with the front axle.

That was the first humorous incident. The second came on the morning of the race. Lee Guinness, Dario Resta and Segrave were all at the pit by the grand-stand, working frantically at final details fifteen minutes before the race was due to start. The grand-stand was packed with tens of thousands of people.

Suddenly there came a blast of martial music, shouts, huzzas and cries of "*Vive la France!*" and up the course came the Minister of the Interior, who was to start the race, followed by about thirty politicians in top hats and frock coats, a band and salvos of cheers. On either side of this "royal" procession marched a file of soldiers with fixed bayonets, pushing back the crowd and clearing the course.

Segrave was bending over the mouth of his pit hard at work with his back to the course. Just as the leading soldier reached him he gave Segrave a terrific push, which shot him head-first into the pit among the oil and tyres.

Segrave leaped out, white with fury, jumped at

the soldier, gave him a straight left to the jaw and down he went on his back. Bedlam broke loose. The crowd yelled and gesticulated, the politicians looked deeply hurt, the soldier picked himself up and ran for an officer to arrest Segrave, the Minister reached the grand-stand and the band struck up the Marseillaise.

Thereupon, Daria Resta, who had seen the whole show and held definite views on officials and politicians, started up his engine and let off a quick fire of blasts from his exhaust, drowning the band and everything else in a volley of roars and bangs.

Meanwhile an officer arrived, complete with sword and six gendarmes, who all screamed and gesticulated together and ordered Segrave to come and be arrested. Segrave merely folded his arms, looked them over coolly and contemptuously and refused to say a word beyond telling them that it was a matter of complete indifference to him where they came from or what they wanted to do. Finding they could not frighten this imperturbable young Englishman, the officer turned his attention to another English driver standing nearby, and ordered him off the road.

This was too much for the driver. Folding his arms, he stuck his legs apart, glared at the officer and pointing dramatically to a car lined up with the others ready to start, announced: "*Je refuse à*

bouger, ça c'est mon voiture !" Which being freely and literally interpreted means : "I refuse to budge, that is my car !" As a matter of fact, it was not his car to which he had pointed, but someone else's. The upshot was that the officer, thoroughly discomfited, marched his men off, crestfallen.

Then the race started. Segrave had an Italian mechanic who had no faith in either the car or its driver, and was more than half-scared all the time. Half-way through the race, Lee Guinness, who was ahead of Segrave, suddenly burst a tyre. All that Segrave saw was a cloud of dust, smoke and stones, with great chunks of rubber flying sky-high. The next moment a flying piece of tyre hit the mechanic across the head. He collapsed as though he had been sand-bagged. Segrave had to drop him at the next stop and take on another.

A little later he was approaching a dangerous corner which could only be taken with safety at under ninety miles an hour. The fields on either side were rough and studded with boulders and gorse bushes. The driver ahead of him was named Ferrari, and just as they neared the corner he must have heard Segrave's exhaust roaring behind him for he glanced round. That brief second nearly killed him. He trod on the accelerator, tried to round the corner at 120 miles an hour instead of 90, missed it, crashed through the fence into a field, and hit an enormous boulder head-on.

The car shot straight up into the air, turned completely over, threw both driver and mechanic into a gorse bush and crashed to earth thirty feet away, a total wreck. Neither Ferrari nor his mechanic were badly hurt. That is one more example of the amazing escapes from death which so often offset the equally astonishing tragedies in this, the most dangerous of all sports.

An even narrower squeak occurred in the same race with Bordino, whom Segrave always regarded as the finest driver in the world. At one corner, as we have said, there was a sheer drop of two hundred feet into a quarry. This was guarded by a palisade of railway sleepers on end and was safe enough if you did not go round it too fast. Bordino tried to.

His car left the road, crashed into the railway sleepers, uprooted three or four, and hung over the lip of the quarry, its two front wheels resting on nothing and the whole body of the car rocking to and fro like a see-saw. The slightest movement forward would have sent it hurtling down.

Bordino, who, by a miracle, had not been thrown out, climbed quietly and calmly out of the back, none the worse. He had escaped death not only by inches, but by ounces.

The next important race that year was the two hundred mile race organized by the Junior Car Club, in which Segrave, Guinness and George

Duller all three succeeded in breaking the two hundred mile world's record in addition to many class records. Otherwise, the race was uninteresting.

The night after it was over, Guinness and Segrave went off to San Sebastian, where they were to drive two super-charged Sunbeams in the Spanish Grand Prix, over a terribly dangerous course of thirty-five laps, which totalled three hundred and eighty-seven miles. There were fourteen starters, representing England, Germany and Italy.

Segrave decided to start slow and finish fast. That decision probably saved his life. In any case Guinness almost lost his own, while his mechanic, Barratt, was killed. The accident was entirely due to the laziness of the Spanish workmen who, true to the national principle of never doing any work which can be avoided, decided that it was much easier to spread clay on certain corners instead of the sand which they were supposed to put down in order to give the tyres a better grip.

Guinness was taking one of these dangerous corners at high speed when his car skidded on the clay, ran up a steep hillside on the left-hand side of the road, rolled down again, turning completely over three times, flung Guinness and his mechanic clean across the road and actually *over the telegraph wires on the other side* into a railway cutting, while

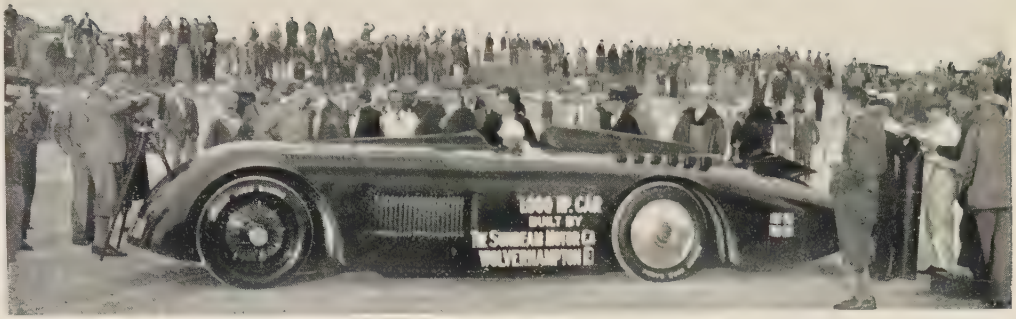
the car itself rolled right across the road and crashed into a stone wall.

Barratt, the mechanic, was killed instantly, while Guinness was very badly injured about the head and legs. A moment later Segrave rounded the bend and was astonished to see his friend's car lying a total wreck by the roadside, while two bodies were being pulled out of the railway cutting. The nearest medical help was three miles away, so that for the next four laps Segrave had to suffer the mental agony of passing a procession of stretcher bearers marching along the roadside, with the two bodies covered up so that he did not know whether his friend was alive or dead.

In addition, Segrave's car was identical with Guinness's, and, as he knew that Guinness was a superb driver, he could only assume that some fault in the car had caused the crash. "I drove after that as if my car was made of glass!" he said.

Previously to this, four foreign cars had turned over during the race, and two others, similar to that which Segrave was driving, had crashed. In spite of all these depressing circumstances and the dangerous state of the road, Segrave won.

This accident to Lee Guinness was followed only a month or so after by one at Montlhery, in which a driver named Ascari was killed. There was a curve on the Montlhery circuit which could



THE 1,000 H.P. CAR, WITH A FEW OF ITS AMERICAN ADMIRERS

just be taken at 130 miles an hour, and Ascari had been rounding it successfully at this speed for some time. Suddenly it began to rain and the road circuit became greasy. Ascari arrived at the corner at the same speed and, of course, found that on the wet surface there was no hope of his getting round.

The car simply turned sideways and went straight on, crashing into the protective palisading at about 120 miles an hour. It then turned over and over, bouncing along the ditch at the side of the road like a ball, and finally came to rest upside down nearly three hundred yards from where it left the road. Ascari, terribly injured, died five minutes later.

In the same year, Segrave once again escaped death by the sheerest piece of luck. He and Dario Resta, a very charming fellow, went down to Brooklands together one afternoon to try and set up two new series of records, one for short distance and the other for long distance. Resta wanted to go down to Eastbourne that day to see his wife, so he asked Segrave if he would mind if he did the short series of runs first. Segrave agreed.

Resta started and, in the third lap at 125 miles an hour, his right-hand back tyre went flat and wrapped itself round the back axle, locking both wheels. No driver could have saved it.

The car swung round and round, plunged backwards through the corrugated iron fencing like a bullet, and the driver was killed instantly.

Had it been a soft, springy wood fence such as is used abroad, it would probably have saved his life. The car would have bounced off. Scores of lives have been saved by such fences. Corrugated iron should never be allowed round any motor race track or circuit. Neither should iron railings.

CHAPTER VIII

An Attempt at Sabotage—The Man who Skidded on His Back at 100 Miles an Hour—"Lynching" a Driver.

THE only occasion on which an attempt at sabotage was ever made during de Hane Segrave's life occurred at Lyons, just before the Grand Prix was run there.

During a practice run he saw the oil pressure gauge drop to zero. He stopped the car at once, investigated the trouble and found aluminium chippings in the oil pressure valve. They were wiped off, the car started again and they travelled another mile. Then the oil pressure gauge dropped again.

This was serious so they stopped the car at once and had to strip the entire engine, or in other words, almost take it to pieces, late in the afternoon with the race only a few hours ahead. The result was that Segrave found a handful of aluminium rivets in the engine. They had been dropped down the "breather" and would have caused a stoppage, if not an actual crash.

Segrave's first great race of 1925 was the Grand Prix de Provence, which was run at Miramas, near

Marseilles. He won it, at an average speed of 78½ miles an hour, although he knew nothing of the course and was totally ignorant of local topography. One of his opponents was Count Conelli, a very charming fellow, who, a short time afterwards, was the hero of what is probably the most astonishing accident in the whole history of motor racing.

Conelli, with Segrave and others, competed in the French Grand Prix which that year was run at Montlhery, near Paris. It was a straightforward flat race, very much like the 200 miles race at Brooklands, but over a course which totalled 310 miles in length. In spite of atrocious weather a crowd of 40,000 or more people assembled to watch the race.

It had hardly started before a storm of thunder, lightning and rain burst over the track. The drivers were racing in sheets of rain with lightning dazzling their eyes and the track almost as slippery as a ballroom floor. In spite of this, Segrave drove his Darracq almost the whole time at over 110 miles an hour.

He, George Duller, the famous steeplechase jockey who is now a racing-motorist, and Count Conelli, were racing almost neck and neck down the last few yards of the track with the finishing line in sight, when Conelli suddenly swerved to avoid Duller, who had skidded slightly.

This put Conelli's car into a skid which he could not control. It hit the retaining wall at about 106 miles an hour, knocked one of the track officials down and almost cut his leg off, and then turned completely over.

Conelli shot over the finishing line, just behind the winner, on his back with his car on top of him at over 100 miles an hour!

Every inch of skin on his back, shoulders and the back of his head was scraped off, but, amazing to relate, he was not killed nor was he seriously injured. To-day he is as well as ever and still driving racing cars. Segrave finished third, a few yards behind him.

This extraordinary accident has never been fully explained and it is certainly never likely to happen again with the same result. It can only be assumed that Count Conelli instinctively drew himself down into the car by clutching the steering wheel as it overturned and thus sheltered every part of his body except the mere fraction of an inch which was represented by the depth of his skin. Ninety-nine drivers out of a hundred in such an accident would have been beheaded or pulped to death.

It was soon after this race, or just before it, that Segrave was involved in one of the most amusing incidents of his whole career. He and Marocchi, his mechanic, had been practising at

Montlhery and left the track rather late to return to Paris, via the suburb of St. Cloud. They had no lights on the car and an open exhaust, but they allowed themselves an hour in which to reach the works in Paris before dark.

Brake trouble developed on the way, and they were held up for twenty minutes or more.

Marocchi at once betted Segrave that they would not reach the works without being arrested. Segrave laid a bet that they would.

They started off again and ran into St. Cloud in pitch darkness at about seventy-five miles an hour with the open exhaust roaring like a Gatling-gun.

Suddenly a beam of light shot across the road; a dark building seemed to erupt gendarmes; screams, shouts and whistles rang out, and Segrave pulled up in the midst of a crowd of whiskered and gesticulating police.

He turned to Marocchi, smiled, and said: "You've won!" The nearest gendarme could not understand this, but he took it as an insult to himself. More screams followed, and Segrave was pounced on and dragged out of the car and into the building, which was the *poste de police*.

Meanwhile, the car was left in the middle of the road, with no lights on. However, that did not seem to worry them. They had their bird in the hand. Other motorists could look after themselves. If they piled themselves up on Segrave's

car, they would, no doubt, also be hauled in for reckless driving.

Inside the *poste*, Segrave was surrounded by excited gendarmes, all palpitating with indignation, and a fearful series of charges were read out, including driving to the public danger, driving without lights, and driving with an open exhaust.

Meanwhile the *brigadier de police*, a sort of deputy chief constable, had been sent for. He arrived and demanded Segrave's licence and passport. Neither were on him so he pretended to understand no French—always a good refuge at such moments—and told his mechanic to tell the police officer that his name was Segrave.

The *brigadier* roared with ironic laughter, and then suddenly thumped the table, glared at them in fury, and roared out:

"*Le Major Segrave! Ah! Bah!* You lie! Major Segrave, I know him well. He is an old friend of mine."

Thereupon he seized a pen and wrote down a further charge of perjury.

Marocchi flew into a terrible rage and for a few minutes a perfect dog-fight developed. They roared, raged, stamped, fumed and swore at each other, threw the papers on the table about and looked within an inch of flying at each other's throats. It was either that or burst blood-vessels.

Suddenly Segrave remembered that he had a

gold cigarette-case and pocket-knife in his pocket, both with his name on. He pulled them out with an appropriately dramatic gesture and pushed them under the *brigadier's* nose. The big Frenchman stared at them, held them up at different angles, peered this side and that and then searched Segrave's face from two or three different points of view as though hidden characteristics were slowly revealing themselves.

Suddenly, an immense and beaming smile spread over his face. His moustachios bristled with good fellowship and in a burst of Gallic friendliness he seized Segrave's hand and violently pumped it up and down, almost embracing him.

All was well. Segrave could do what he liked, go where he liked and as fast as he liked. He almost expected to be given *carte blanche* to run down as many gendarmes as he liked!

The *brigadier* leaped for the telephone, rang up the next police-station on the road, told them to let the car go by, and then, with the utmost gravity and good nature, presented Segrave with a red paper Chinese lantern which he told him he was to hang on the front of his car!

It was one of those little paper lanterns which Parisian workmen hang on their bicycles or sometimes carry in their teeth as they are cycling home. The *brigadier* solemnly lit the stump of candle inside it, hung it on the bonnet of the car and

waved them off at a snail's pace, bowing and scraping in the middle of the road and blowing kisses of good luck.

This was not Segrave's only encounter with the French police, although, as everywhere, he almost invariably got on well with them. This particular incident, however, was the exception which proved the rule.

He was driving a racing car through Paris one day. It was very fast and made an appalling noise. Suddenly, in the Place Vendome, whistles rang out and all the traffic stopped. Segrave never took Parisian traffic and its alarms and crises too seriously, so he merely slowed up and did not look round. A moment later up rushed four mysterious men in blue on wooden-rimmed racing bicycles with automatic pistols at their belts.

A gorgeous official in gold and silver braid, very fat and whiskered like a brigand, next arrived in a car. He jumped out with astonishing agility, leaped into Segrave's car and commanded him abruptly: "*A la Poste.*" ("To the police-station".)

Segrave was not going to argue with four policemen with pistols, so off they went at a snail's pace with the bodyguard in blue following on their bicycles. Segrave asked the police officer several times what all the fuss was about, but got no answer. The moment he stopped the car at the police-station he was hauled out, rushed inside and

flung into the cell for "drunks". It had a stone floor, an iron grille high up in the wall, four tramps on benches and a collection of the most appalling smells.

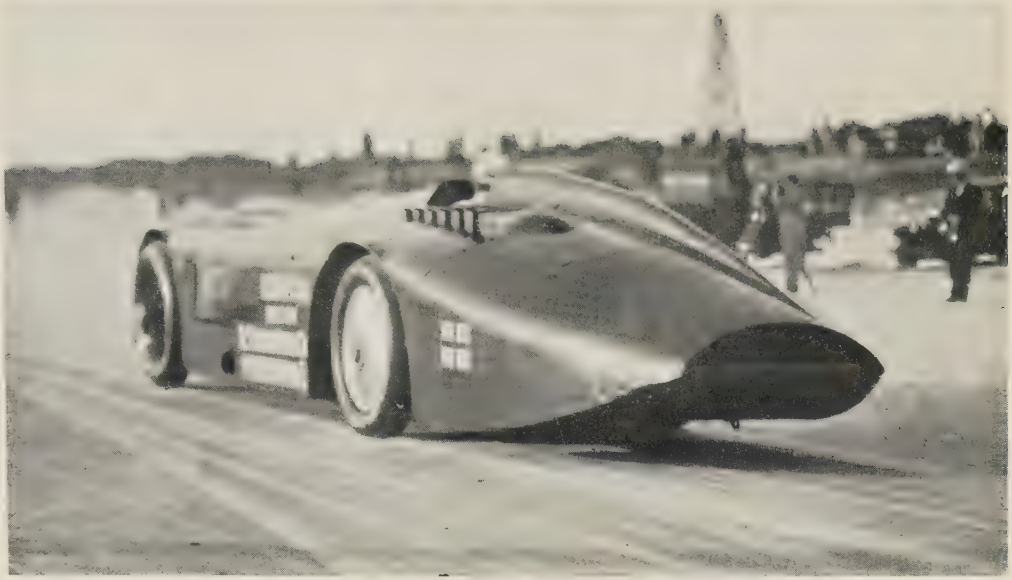
Here he was shut up for two hours, fuming with indignation. Finally the door opened, two gendarmes seized him and he was hauled up before some sort of official who was apparently a very bigwig.

He expected, at least, a charge of having seriously endangered life or property. Instead, he was asked why he had no number-plate.

He explained that it must have dropped off and told the official his name. The man would not believe him and Segrave was obliged to ring up his hotel, the motor works and the office of the motor car company before the police would accept his word.

He was then given a severe lecture on the enormity of his offence and released without the faintest suggestion of any sort of apology for his imprisonment.

A much more amusing incident happened one night when he was driving his wife to their hotel in a big touring car. They were going slowly by the Arc de Triomphe when, suddenly, the usual storm of whistles broke out behind. As everyone in Paris seems to scream and whistle when the spirit moves them, Segrave paid no



A REAR VIEW OF THE 1,000 H.P. SUNBEAM AT DAYTONA, 1927

attention and went straight on. He was soon stopped and told that he had driven on the wrong side of an island. As there were four of them abreast, right across the road, the average Englishman could be forgiven for having kept close to the kerb as he had done. However, that was apparently reserved for slow traffic.

The gendarme who had stopped him demanded his name and all the rest of it and as Segrave did not want his wife to be hauled off to the police-station, he remembered his excellent French for once and explained fluently that he had merely borrowed the car from the works *pour promener.* He was about to add, *dans la ville*, when the gendarme suddenly roared with laughter, slapped him on the back and exclaimed :

"*Ah, monsieur ! Pour promener avec une poule !* ("A little bit of fluff".) *Une poule Anglaise, n'est ce pas ?*"

"*Oui ! Une poule !*" Segrave replied gaily, to his wife's indignation, and off they drove with the gendarme crying : "Good luck !"

Segrave had another amusing encounter with the police a year or two later when he was on his way to Southport Sands, where he set up his speed record of 153.3 miles an hour over the sands.

He had just driven on to the course in a touring car with his wife and the Earl of Cottenham, a

few minutes before he was due to start on his attempt to set up a new world's record.

An enormous policeman approached him and leaning over the car, whispered confidentially :

"Do you mind moving on, sir ? If you park behind the flags there you will have a good view of him, he is just coming !"

"Who ?" Segrave asked blankly, for the constable's solemnity seemed to presage the coming of the devil at least.

"Major Segrave, sir," he replied.

"But I am Major Segrave," Segrave explained.

The constable's eyes opened wide in childlike wonder, a vast smile illumined his face and the car departed with his blessing.

During a practice run for that particular race, Segrave was sitting in the car with a leather flap buttoned up round him to keep the wind out, and as he passed the end of the measured distance he felt under the flap for the button switch to stop the engine. He could not find it. The car meanwhile was tearing on at 2½ miles a minute, well on the way to Blundell Sands. Segrave groped under the flap, unable to stop the car and not daring to take his eyes off the sands in front to look for the switch.

Finally he found it, and pulled up the car some miles beyond where he should have stopped.

Captain Irving, the head of the Sunbeam racing

department, soon arrived and asked him why he had not been able to stop. Segrave told him.

"Oh," Irving explained, "they changed the position of that switch last night. You ought to have been told about it."

"No wonder I couldn't find the switch," Segrave replied.

"What was that?" exclaimed a particularly pertinacious autograph hunter who was among the crowd that had now gathered.

"Major Segrave couldn't find the switch."

"Why not?" and out came a little notebook in which he was always jotting down things.

"Well, you see," Irving explained dryly, "Major Segrave managed to get out his little book of instructions all right when he wanted to stop, but unfortunately pages forty-three and forty-four, which indicated the position of the switch, were stuck together—so you see he couldn't very well stop!"

"Oh! I see. Thanks—er, thanks, most awfully," replied the pertinacious one, and down it all went in the little book!

Who could imagine that such ingenuous gullibility existed?

CHAPTER IX

The Great Southport Record—One Hundred and Fifty-two Miles an Hour—The Car that Flew! —Segrave's Narrowest Escape From Death.

THE Southport speed record referred to in the last chapter is worth more than mere passing mention. The car which was built for this attempt and the speed which Segrave attained on it created a landmark, not only in his own career, but in motor car construction. In the first place the car constructed for the attempt was intended to be something which would conform fairly closely to ordinary touring car standards. In the second place, Segrave came within a fraction of achieving the remarkable speed of three miles a minute.

The car itself weighed just under a ton. In spite, however, of the enormous speed which it was expected to reach, it was much lower in power than many of the ordinary touring cars and was a mere matchbox in size compared with some of the huge cars that had been constructed to create world records. The records which Segrave was out to beat were those for the flying mile and flying kilometre of 150.77 m.p.h. and 150.766 m.p.h., which had been previously set up by Captain

THE SANDS AT DAYTONA, SHOWING THE WHEEL TRACKS OF THE GIANT SUNBEAM

Malcolm Campbell on a 350 h.p. Sunbeam. Segrave's car was rated at only 33 h.p.

The attempt was made over a stretch of about seven miles of dead straight, dead level sand, and it was expected that the car would attain its maximum speed within a mile and a half from starting. There were numerous difficulties to contend with, one of which was the fact that these sands are only fit for really high-speed work about half a dozen times during the year, when conditions of wind and tide are favourable.

Another even more important point was the fact that a car rated nominally at only 33 h.p. would have to be super-efficient in every point if it was to beat the record set up by Captain Campbell's 350 h.p. twelve-cylinder Sunbeam. The time taken in covering the distance was to be registered by a device which is actually accurate to within one hundredth part of a second.

The car was fitted with one supercharger only, but it was soon found that this was not equal to its work. The casing kept cracking. No less than six casings were cracked before the actual record was broken and as there was no time in which to send the car to the works and have two small superchargers fitted instead of one, Segrave had to manage as best he could. Captain Irving, the chief engineer of the Sunbeam Company, had a long talk with Segrave, the result of which was

the suggestion of certain modifications made by Captain Irving. The mechanics worked throughout two entire nights carrying out these alterations and, when their work was finished, it was decided to attempt the record at once.

The car was towed to the timekeeper's box out on the sands, hot water was poured into the radiator and a gang of men started the car by pushing it. It was driven once at three-quarter throttle over the course and then back again, and Segrave then turned it round in order to drive it full out for the third and last time in order to break the record. He had already agreed with Captain Irving that if the latter could guarantee him three minutes' life for the supercharger casing he would attain a record speed. The three minutes were up, however, and before the car had reached anything like its maximum speed the casing cracked again. Even so, as it roared over the sands, a mere blur to the eyes of the spectators who watched it, it had achieved over 152 miles an hour.

Segrave always said that it would have reached an even higher speed than this but for the fact that there was a slight dip in the sands at one place where a tiny stream, only an inch or two deep, trickled down to the sea. The car took this dip with a terrific bump and, roaring like an aeroplane, left the ground completely and travelled like a bullet through the air for forty-nine feet

before it hit the sand again and continued its course.

Segrave maintained that while the car was in the air the engine raced up and so caused the damage to the casing.

This was the first time at which he ever exceeded 150 miles an hour, and he said afterwards that what struck him most about it was the fact that he almost seemed to lose control of the car and found that he had to turn the steering wheel in a very wide arc before the car answered at all and showed any change of direction.

Immediately after this race, he left England for France and travelled to Marseilles, where he was due to drive a Talbot-Darracq car in the Grand Prix de Provence against thirty-five other cars. Oddly enough, one of his colleagues in the Talbot-Darracq team was Moriceau, his own mechanic, who had now become a fully-fledged racing driver.

Segrave's car did not run very well at the start of the race, but after five or six laps she improved and he soon ran into the lead. It seemed as though he would win comfortably, but just towards the finish of the race he noticed that, every time he flashed past the pits, his own pit staff were signalling him to go slower. The result was that when there were still ten miles to go and he was not travelling as fast as he would have liked, he suddenly heard the roar of a car coming up behind him. Glancing

round for the fraction of a second, he saw a big supercharged Bugatti hot on his tail.

This was serious as, up to then, he had been leading this car by about seven minutes. He immediately put his foot down, "trod on everything in sight", and let the car rip. The next time he passed the pit he waved to them to signal him as to how far behind this uncomfortable rival was.

A lap later, as he flashed by the pits again the entire pit crew, including mechanics, tyre fitters, engineers and the chief, were all out on the track, waving handkerchiefs, hats, spanners and oil cans, frantically signalling him to go all out. This was perhaps a little unnecessary. He was already going as hard as he knew. On the next lap he shot over the finishing line, the winner of the race.

The Bugatti had either blown up, capsized or stopped, and Moriceau, his old mechanic, came in second.

The next big race was the Spanish Grand Prix at San Sebastian. In this race he was to drive the car which had done 150 miles an hour at Southport. The course had been much improved and the car handled well from the start. Segrave was leading up to the sixth lap, when, suddenly, as he shot past the grand-stand he saw the spectators standing up, screaming, waving and pointing, and realized that there must be something amiss with the car.

Suddenly he noticed that both front wheels

seemed to be bending inwards. He slackened speed instantly. Even so, he was still travelling at about 90 miles an hour when the front axle snapped clean in half, the front wheels folded flat up against the bonnet and the whole front part of the car crashed down on to the road and charged ahead like a plough, tearing up a hundred yards of the surface.

By an amazing piece of luck the car travelled forward dead straight, although it was, of course, utterly impossible to steer it. Had it swerved even a few inches to one side or the other, it would have turned over and he would have been killed inevitably.

This escape was due to the fact that the axle broke dead in the middle. If it had broken on either one side or the other the car would have twisted to that side. As it was, the broken ends of the axle ploughed into the road and helped to pull up the car. The steering wheel hit him in the stomach and knocked him out. He collapsed almost unconscious. Had not the steering wheel been flexible with plenty of resilience, he would have been killed by the blow alone.

The inevitable amusing incident which nearly always enlivens a road race on the Continent happened during this particular race. An amateur, who said he was going to show the professionals how they should perform, entered his "specially

built" car for the race. Alas, it did not come up to the limit of weight imposed by the regulations.

But he was not defeated. "What about filling up the tail with lead ?" he asked. This ingenious idea was carried out—but he made the tactical error of not securing the ballast in the car before he started. The result was that while the car was taking the first corner the weights slithered along the tail until they reached the very end of it and, acting like a pendulum, swung the car round and round in a circle and sent it crashing into the wall of a public-house.

This reminds one of the fact that in the previous year's Grand Prix on the same course, Segrave discovered to his horror that his own car was underweight. This arose from the fact that the engineers had taken a certain clause in the regulations to mean one thing when in actual fact it meant nothing like it.

He was faced with the possibility of being prevented from starting when the cars were weighed in. Luckily, there were a few hours to spare before the race started, so he and his mechanics filled every available crevice on the car with boiling lead.

The result was that the car weighed nearly half a ton over the limit, but that did not matter. The only danger was that some inquisitive official might poke a stick up the exhaust pipe. Luckily, nobody did.

Another amusing side-show which happened at San Sebastian occurred when an unknown amateur decided, for some mysterious reason, to enter a small two-seater in a race for fast touring cars. History does not relate why he did so, but as all the seats in the grand-stand had already been sold, it may be, perhaps, that he thought it a good way of seeing the race.

The first time he passed the grand-stand, doing at least 38 miles an hour, with other cars roaring past him at 80 and 90, he was cheered to the echo. Everyone thought it great fun. The next time round his reception was not quite so good. On the third lap the spectators stood up and flung bits of orange peel and Spanish oaths at him. The fourth time round some roughs in the crowd dashed out on to the track when they saw him coming and held him up. He was told in forcible and highly-ornamented Spanish that if he did not stop making a fool of himself by getting in the way of faster and better cars he would be thrown off the track.

Like a fool he tried it on once more. No sooner did he appear than the crowd swarmed on to the track, held up his car, hauled him out of the seat and carried him bodily across the track to a steep bank which slopes down on to the green of a golf course thirty feet below. He was swung, "one, two", by legs and arms and then sent flying

over the bank, spreadeagled in the air. He crashed on the green below, like a sack of wheat, and struggled painfully up, a sadder and wiser man, with a broken collar-bone, water on the knee and all the wind knocked out of him. He was lucky to escape with so little injury.

Talking of San Sebastian reminds one of a typical challenge which Segrave threw out to some of the Spanish bull-fighters either that year or thereabouts. He went to see a bull-fight. He was so disgusted with it that he walked out half-way through. This was regarded as an insult to the national sport. He was told that bull-fighting demanded every bit as much courage as driving a racing car and that, therefore, he should have shown it more consideration.

"All right," he replied, "I'll fight one of your bulls if one of your matadors will come round the track with me in my racing car at top speed. That's a fair offer."

No one accepted.

He capped this by going to the bull-ring one day and strolling casually down to the ring-side. An enormous bull, with horns long enough to transfix a horse, was standing in the middle of the stone-walled ring, rumbling ominously in his chest and swaying his head from side to side.

The ring, which was large and wide, was surrounded by tiny concrete shelters placed at regular

intervals. There was just sufficient room for a man to squeeze behind one of these shelters out of the bull's reach.

Segrave calmly picked up a stone and flung it with all his force against the wall on the far side of the bull-ring. The bull heard the sound of the stone striking the wall and instantly lowered his head and charged full-tilt in the direction of the sound.

At the same instant Segrave vaulted into the ring and raced like a hare across to one of the concrete shelters. The bull heard the sound of his running feet and came for him at top speed, head down and tail up. Segrave just whipped into the tiny shelter a second ahead of the bull, who crashed into the protecting wall with such force that he chipped off flakes of concrete. After that no bull-fighter ever questioned Segrave's views on the sport again.

From San Sebastian, Segrave returned to England where he drove in the Junior Car Club's two hundred mile race at Brooklands. Curiously enough, Moriceau, who was also driving, suffered from exactly the same accident which had happened to Segrave in Spain. His front axle snapped precisely in the same place, dead in the middle. Fortunately, the ends of the axle did not dig into the ground and Moriceau had sufficient presence of mind to pull up gradually, instead of clapping his

brakes on hard as nine people out of ten would have done. Had he done so, the front wheels would have locked and the car would have crashed.

Segrave did not win this race, but he did achieve the record lap and won the Stanley Trophy, although he was having terrible trouble with his brakes.

Immediately after the race he drove down to the company's garage on the track, where Mr. Alan Fenn had arranged a bang-up champagne lunch for the drivers. There had been considerable trouble with the cars driven by the team and the moment Segrave entered the garage, he found all the drivers indulging in a terrific dog-fight in which half the languages of Europe were being used in about fifteen different keys. Certain alterations in the design of the cars had proved unsatisfactory during the race and the drivers were now telling Monsieur Bertarioni exactly what they thought of him, his ideas, the axles, the brakes, the cars and everything to do with them.

For a minute or two one excited foreigner would scream louder than all the rest. Then another one, finding that he was not getting his full share of the fun, would pitch his protests on a different note, thus getting the attention of the others. For sixty seconds he would make himself heard. Then someone else would chip in on a different key and the whole thing would start

over again. Meanwhile, Bertarioni was leaning coolly against the wall, chewing a toothpick and taking no notice of anyone.

Divo was protesting that it was an insult that a driver of his reputation should be asked to drive a car which burst into a million pieces every time he tried to speed or slow down—the result was the same in either case.

Moriceau was bellowing in French that it was preposterous that cars should be made which broke down within three miles of starting. The row went on all through lunch.

Afterwards, Segrave, who had refused to take any part in it and was enjoying the whole thing enormously, drove Bertarioni, Moriceau and Divo back to London where he dumped them in the middle of St. James's Street, still shouting and waving their hands at each other, with a quick-fire of French and Italian, to the great diversion of a small knot of passers-by who watched the whole thing, not understanding a word of what was being said.

One feature about this race, amusing to the bystanders but not to the drivers, was that the Delage team who won, were driving cars whose exhaust pipes passed within a few inches of their feet. Their shoes became so hot that every time they stopped at the pit they jumped out and put their feet into buckets of cold water. The soles of

their shoes were so hot that they actually hissed when they went into the water.

One of the Delage drivers, named Seneschal, created a great deal of laughter. He announced loudly that he hated the mere sight of Brooklands, or any track, because he was a road racer first and foremost and regarded tracks with contempt. To demonstrate his contempt, every time he took a bend he twisted his car broadside on and then straightened it, with eloquent gestures, during which he flourished his hands in the air, leaving the car to twist about as it liked.

Soon afterwards, Segrave went over to France again, where he took part in an amazing road race at Boulogne, in which he set up the world's record speed on the road and escaped death by sheer Providence.

He was due to drive the car which had set up the record at Southport and had broken its axle at San Sebastian.

CHAPTER X

Another World's Record—A Hundred and Forty Miles an Hour on the Road—When Segrave was Really Frightened—The Car Out of Control

THE record which Segrave was expected to beat at Boulogne was that for five kilometres on the road, the speed for which stood at 126 miles an hour. His most formidable opponent was that wonderful sportsman, the late Mr. J. G. Parry-Thomas, who had entered his big Leyland car, so well-known to thousands of visitors to Brooklands. It was known that this car was capable of doing 140 miles an hour on the straight at Brooklands, and Parry-Thomas was a man with far wider experience than Segrave.

The fact that Segrave had already done 152 miles an hour at Southport did not help him very much, for that record had been set up on a wide stretch of sand, whereas now he was faced with the knowledge that he had to let out the car on a narrow, hilly road studded with potholes, heavily cambered and edged by a ditch. It was just about as dangerous a course as he could have driven on, with such a speed in view. Parry-Thomas, then

regarded as one of the crack drivers in the world, was opposing him for the first time.

In addition, although Parry-Thomas's car was geared for a maximum speed of 140 miles an hour, certain alterations had been made to Segrave's car which was geared only for a maximum of 132 miles an hour. Captain Irving had said that he did not think it would be possible for Segrave to achieve that speed and stick to such a road.

Another drawback was, that as Segrave's car was one of the fastest, he had several hours to wait before he was given the signal to start. This meant that during all that time the engine got colder and colder, and the driver's nerves and temperament were kept on the jump the whole time.

Finally, the starting marshal warned him to line up his car and stood beside him with a stop-watch. Thirty seconds to go, twenty, ten, five—the flag fell, the car leaped forward with a roar and Segrave wedged himself tightly into his seat, put down his foot and drove for all he was worth.

The road lay over three steep hills. It seemed like an ever-narrowing ribbon, lined with a wall of faces on either side. As the speed increased, so the ribbon grew narrower and narrower. The first hill rushed towards him; he took it at well over 135 miles an hour with the car leaping and bounding so that it only seemed to touch the road every few yards. He was almost thrown out.

Down the other side the car roared, gathering speed at every yard. His stomach felt sick and his eyes were blurred. The car swooped down into the valley and shot up the next hill, the steepest of all. Just before it reached the top, a bad bump in the road threw it into the gutter along which it raced at top speed for fifty yards and then shot over the crest of the hill and flew straight forward into the air, leaving the ground completely. It actually flew thirty feet, but by the grace of God landed bang in the middle of the road and flashed over the finishing line a hundred yards farther on.

Segrave pulled up, got out, leaned unsteadily against the side of the car, his hand to his head, swaying from side to side, and then suddenly collapsed as though he had been struck in the stomach. The whole thing had only taken three minutes, yet he felt completely knocked out.

Suddenly an official rushed breathlessly up the road from the timekeeper's box and panted out excitedly that the car had averaged 140.6 miles per hour over the full distance, and had actually covered one kilometre at an average of 148.1 miles an hour, although unfortunately this latter speed was only hand-timed and, therefore, did not count for the record. The 140.6 miles an hour was the highest figure ever achieved in speed trials on a road and stands unbroken to this day.

Later in the afternoon of the same day, Segrave

was just about to start in a hill-climb test in which several other cars had already started when he was suddenly saved from what would have been certain death, by the fraction of a minute.

At the moment of starting, when his car was actually on the line, after three and three-quarter hours of waiting, another driver dashed up in a car, pulled up dead in front of Segrave and began excitedly to pour out a torrent of French.

Segrave was just about to protest when he caught the gist of the excited words and realized with a sudden shock that one of his oldest and dearest friends, Captain Richard Howey, who was also driving in the race, had just been killed in a terrible accident within thirty feet of where Mrs. Segrave was standing some distance down the course.

This accident is perhaps best described in the words of a special correspondent of the *Morning Post*, who telegraphed the following graphic dispatch to his newspaper:

Boulogne, August 26th.

"The first day's motor racing at Boulogne was cut short abruptly this afternoon by one of the most terrible accidents that has ever taken place on a road track. Mr. Richard Howey, a British speed 'Ace', who won the Gold Cup at Brooklands on Easter Monday last, was killed, as was one

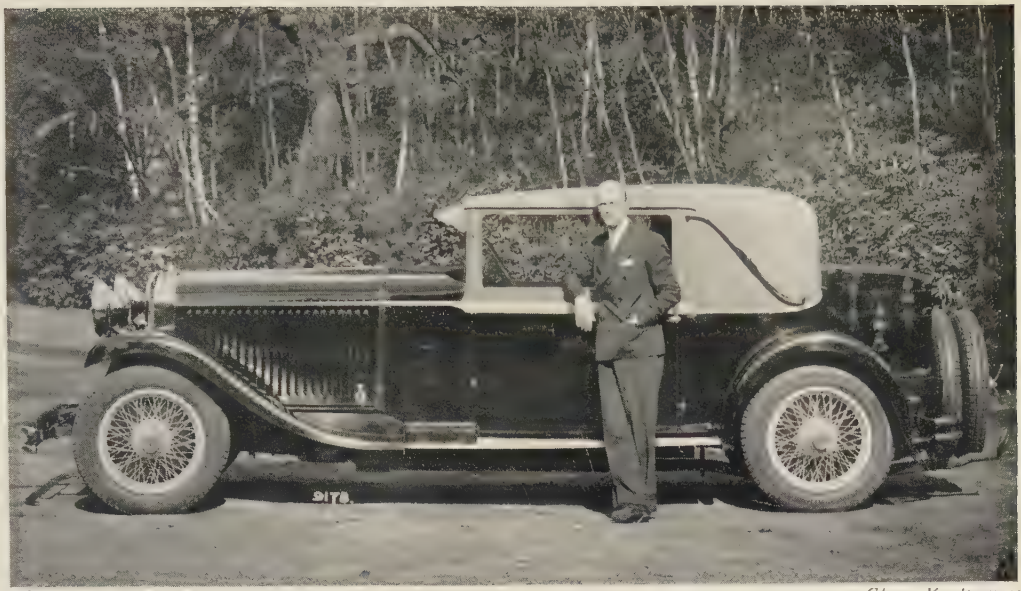


Photo *Chas. K. Bowers*

SIR HENRY, WITH ONE OF HIS OWN TOURING CARS

spectator, and three other spectators were seriously injured.

"Mr. Howey was competing with his monster Ballot car in the kilometre flying start hill test. This car was bought from Count Zborowski, who was killed at Milan eighteen months ago.

"Mr. Howey was the last but three to leave the post, and was seen off by Major Segrave, in the 'Hush-Hush' Sunbeam, and by Mr. Parry-Thomas, who was driving the giant Leyland-Thomas. Both Major Segrave and Mr. Parry-Thomas were to follow at one minute intervals.

"The hill is exceedingly steep and treacherous, with a number of blind corners. It was at the summit of the second hill and at the corner that the tragedy took place. Spectators on the brow of the hill heard the powerful engine roaring in the distance, and a few seconds later saw the great white car turning the corner at well over a hundred miles an hour.

"At this moment Mr. Howey, unable to check speed, skidded off across the road. Twice he tried in vain to check his skid, and then appeared to lose all control of his car. One could see him frantically trying to keep his hand on the steering wheel, but it seemed too great a strain.

"Scores of spectators were lining the roads and hundreds more had taken their stand in a meadow above the bend. There was a moment of tense

silence, and then followed a deafening crash. Mr. Howey had caught the wing of a two-seater motor-car belonging to a spectator. The little car swung round and began swinging like a top. The Ballot took a lurch to the right and, at a terrific speed, crashed into the middle of the spectators lining the ditch.

"So great was the speed of the car and so enormous the impact, that the tail of the Ballot reared completely up and hit the front of a tree, cutting a hole several inches deep in the wood. The whole of the tail was thrown several yards away to the left. The back axle was cut in two, and there was nothing left of the car behind the driver's seat.

"The petrol tank burst with a noise like a cannon shot, the front axle and radiator were torn away and twisted like matchwood, and what was left of the car finally landed in the ditch.

"The people at the side of the road gave vent to a cry of fear, which abated only to give way to the moaning of the injured. A policeman on duty had his leg broken in more than one place; M. Duboisle, of Boulogne, a spectator, was struck so severely that he is not expected to live. Another spectator, Mr. Peters, of Boulogne, was killed outright; a M. Duboisson sustained compound fractures of the leg; and Howey was left a crumpled mass at the bottom of the twisted chassis. Once

they had recovered from the shock, people rushed to the rescue, but it soon became apparent that the driver, too, had been killed immediately.

"Meantime, at the start, Major Segrave was listening to the timekeeper's voice, half-drowned by the roar of the great engine of the Sunbeam. The timekeeper was shouting: 'Fifteen seconds, ten, five, four, three, two—' Suddenly, just as the car was about to leap forward, the telephone operator at the side of the road shouted at the top of his voice: 'Stop! Stop! The car in front of you has crashed.' That telephone call saved Major Segrave's life by exactly forty seconds.

"Parry-Thomas rushed up to inquire what was the matter, and a few minutes later a woman driving frantically down the hill arrived at the start, shouting out: 'Don't go. There's been a terrible crash. Howey is killed and has pinned down three spectators, who are dying.'

"Meanwhile, Mrs. Segrave at the top of the hill was terrified that her husband would suddenly appear, doing over 100 miles an hour. Her relief at finally seeing him safe can readily be imagined."

It is not to be wondered at that after this distressing experience, Mrs. Segrave shuddered at the thought of watching another race in which her husband might take part. She was thoroughly

upset and returned to England the next morning.

The next race was the Italian Grand Prix at Monza. Segrave had entered for it, but one of the conditions of the race was that the cars had to be over the Italian frontier by September 1st.

Frantic efforts were, therefore, made to rush it from Boulogne, but when he asked for a railway truck to put his car in he found an unexpected difficulty.

"The car," said the Boulogne officials, "if it is to reach Italy in time, must travel in a truck attached to the *train de luxe*, but there are only about four such trucks between Paris and here possessing Westinghouse brakes. A truck attached to a *train de luxe* must have them."

By telegraphing and telephoning a truck was traced at St. Omer. It was imperative to have it brought to Boulogne in time to put the car on board and send it with the 8 a.m. express to Italy. An engine was waiting at the station with steam up, but no driver. The minutes gradually passed and still no driver appeared. Segrave jumped on the footplate, and, with the aid of a fireman, drove the engine to the siding where the truck had been found.

On arrival they coupled up, reversed the engine, and drove it back to Boulogne just in the nick of time to put the car on board and attach it to the express.

Photo *The Motor Boat*

MAJOR SEGRAVE'S FIRST OUTBOARD MOTOR BOAT

This new and unexpected feat created great amusement among the English racing drivers, but at any rate he thought he had assured himself that his car would be in time. But the story does not end there.

Segrave himself went on to Milan, from whence he drove out to see the racing track at Monza. This track is laid out in the form of a figure eight. Half of it is banked like Brooklands and the other half is a flat, good road. The whole track lies within the Royal Park and is far and away the most beautiful motor race track in Europe.

Most of the corners are what is described as "fast", which means that they could be taken with a slight margin of safety at 100 miles an hour. This, in itself, to speak paradoxically, made them all the more dangerous, for it meant that during the course of a race a whole bunch of cars would be trying to take the corners, all of them travelling pretty well flat out. It needs no imagination to picture the result of a skid on such a corner with other cars to either side and behind you.

Segrave realized the potentialities of the course as soon as he saw it, and to make sure of all its dangers and possibilities he walked over every inch of it. This took him a considerable time, but by doing so he was able to fix in his mind every detail of the course.

Most racing drivers encounter more thrills in

their everyday lives than the average man meets in a year, but Segrave seemed to be pursued by a particular demon of fate which was always creating for him situations in which the tragic, the humorous, the exasperating and the ridiculous were equally blended. Monza kept up the tale.

Next morning, when he got up and went out after breakfast, he discovered that his mechanics had arrived, but there was no sign of the car. Knowing the Italian temperament and the *flair* which it possesses for losing anything and everything for an indefinite period of time, he did not bother particularly that day, feeling that the car would be pretty sure to turn up the next morning. After all, as it had only taken two days to travel the six or seven hundred miles from Paris to the Italian frontier, it was scarcely reasonable to expect that it would take less than two days to travel the hundred miles or so from the frontier to Milan.

Next day dawned. There was no car. Telegrams were sent. Telephone messages were dispatched to all railway stations. Segrave began to get impatient. The third day arrived. Still no car. The fourth day was equally blank.

By this time Segrave was thoroughly agitated. It was quite likely, knowing Italy, that the car had been sent off to Brindisi and was even now possibly on its way to the Far East.

The situation was desperate. Each day lost meant less time in which to practice, and on such a dangerous course practice was even more vitally necessary than usual. Finally, in a state of agitation, Segrave went to the goods station at Milan and searched every train, truck and shed in the place.

Workmen and officials tried to question him and prevent him prying into holes and corners, but the stern-faced young Englishman with the piercing eyes was in no mood to be trifled with. He brushed them aside and in atrocious Italian insisted that as the railway had lost the car he was going to search the railway until he found it.

Suddenly, his heart performed the orthodox leap. There, a hundred yards away, run into the end of a rusty single track line, stood a truck extraordinarily like the one in which the car had been packed. Segrave strode over to it and peering through the chinks in its walls was delighted to see the car gleaming within.

The doors were sealed and all sorts of pains and penalties would have been incurred had he touched it. He, therefore, went straight off to the station-master, whom he had badgered continually for the last three or four days, and told him that he had discovered the van and the car in the station-master's own yard. The station-master argued. He said it was impossible. Segrave retorted that nothing was impossible in Italy and that in any

case he intended to have the van opened if he had to do it himself.

The station-master finally consented to go with him and look at the van.

"That," he exclaimed when it was pointed out to him, "that van contains no motor car. It is full of perishable goods that have been here three days waiting to be called for. Your car in it! What nonsense! I tell you it is soft goods."

"You're a liar," retorted Segrave, losing his temper at last. "Open that van or I'll do it myself."

This was too much for the excitable Italian. The usual Continental argument followed. For ten minutes the station-master protested, gesticulated and declaimed. Segrave remained icy and imperative. Finally, the station-master, in a burst of indignation, announced that he would break the seal and show the mad Englishman the soft goods in the van just to show him how utterly wrong he was. The door was opened—there was the car. Curtain!

The next day the car was taken out for practice under a boiling sun. The heat was somewhere about 105 degrees in the shade and sitting in the cockpit was like sitting in an oven. Segrave went round the track once or twice to accustom himself to it and then, feeling that he knew the circuit, put his foot down on the loud pedal and went flat out for all he was worth.

The car roared round the banking and took the corners on the flat at a hair-raising speed, slithering about all over the place until it was almost out of control.

When he finally pulled up at the pits he got out fully expecting to be told that he had set up a new speed record for the track. To his astonishment his mechanic Perkins, who had been timing him, said casually :

"You're not doing so badly for the first time out, and when you put in a few more practice laps you ought to be able to go quite fast."

"What on earth are you talking about ?" Segrave asked.

"What I say," Perkins replied.

"What did you time me at ?"

"Four minutes, fifteen seconds."

"Well, all I can say is that your stop-watch must be wrong, because I was going as fast as I knew how," he replied. "Anyway, I'll do it again and you had better time me carefully all over again."

Thoroughly irritated, he climbed into his car and shot round the course at a speed which almost took away his breath. He took every possible risk and some of the corners were rounded at a speed, which, to him, seemed to be the most the car was capable of. This was about 90 miles an hour and at that rate the car was skidding about all over the place.

When he got back Perkins reported that he had done the lap in four minutes, two seconds. This completely dumbfounded Segrave as, before going on the track, he had personally timed some of the fastest Italian drivers and found that their best car could not do it in less than three minutes, fifty seconds. His own performance in comparison was bad.

He spent the whole afternoon going round and round the track. Never once did his time drop below four minutes. He was so disappointed by the evening that he decided that if the car was not capable of anything better than that, it had better be withdrawn from the race. Otherwise he would end up among the last three or four, and that would be bad for British prestige.

Next morning, while the car was being attended to, he walked down to the track and, with his typical attention to every possible detail, watched the Italian tactics closely. Suddenly, the cause of his lack of speed dawned on him. The Italian drivers were constantly shooting round and round the very top of the banking where there was no retaining wall to stop them from dropping sheer over the edge if they skidded.

They were actually travelling with their outside wheels within six inches of the edge, below which was a sheer drop of many feet. By taking this risk they were cornering at a good 120 miles an hour.

Segrave himself had been cornering much lower down on the banking, with the result that the car had been travelling like a crab with the back wheels always trying to shoot the tail round.

He went back to the car, started up and proceeded to corner at a speed which fairly took away the breath of the onlookers. The car was flying round the top of the banking within an inch or two of the outside edge at a rate which clearly showed that he had beaten anything the Italian cars could do.

When he came back and asked for his time he found that he had broken the record for the track by doing the lap in three minutes, twenty-eight seconds, an average speed of 110½ miles an hour for the whole circuit, corners and all. The previous lap record had stood at three minutes, thirty-two seconds.

After this, victory seemed certain, but in motor racing nothing is certain. When the race began, Segrave drove into first place at the end of the first lap and kept there until nearly half-way through the race. Then part of the mechanism cracked up and the car had to be stopped. It was a bitter disappointment to him.

The next day he rushed back to Paris and shortly afterwards was on his way to England where he went straight to Brooklands and, driving magnificently, won the 270 miles race.

The race was uneventful, except for the fact that Moriceau skidded about half-way through, shot up on to the top of one of the artificial sand-banks and stuck there for half an hour with the car rocking like a see-saw, while he dug frantically at the sand to extricate it. It took him half an hour to do so, but even with this serious handicap he managed to finish sixth.

When the General Strike broke out in 1926, a certain band of racing-motorists gathered together and attached themselves to Scotland Yard, using their own cars. The times were ticklish and their work risky.

Two days after the strike was declared there was such an influx of all sorts of vehicles into London, there being no trains, trams, omnibuses or taxis, except those driven by amateurs, that the police had established police-traps to endeavour to regulate the traffic somewhat.

A car passed through the trap on the Thames Embankment at a terrific speed, taking no notice of police whistles, or signals. A few minutes later Scotland Yard was rung up on the telephone urgently and told that car No. . . . had passed through the control and traffic at 71 miles an hour. Would they please trace that car and arrest the driver at once? The reply they got was that that car was the property of Major H. O. D. Segrave,

Photo *Daily Mail*

MISS ALACRITY

and that his passage was to be facilitated at all times as he was on urgent Government business and that these instructions were being sent to all Metropolitan police-stations immediately.

Segrave and the others had the time of their lives with their fast cars and no traffic control, yet in spite of it not a single accident happened to one of them or their cars. They were probably the pick of the world's drivers.

Their work carried them into the very worst districts, generally for raids on Bolshevik and Communistic centres of activity, where endeavours were being made to incite the populace into rioting and where propaganda of the worst description was being spread like poison gas.

Segrave himself succeeded in getting into the "Inner Circle" on one occasion and just escaped with his life. He got enough evidence to have the place raided, hauling in nine of the thirteen members, who were kept in prison until the strike was over. Four of them were then deported back to Russia. Three of the missing four were caught two days after. Most of the work that they did was highly secret and cannot be described in a book such as this, but it certainly can be called very exciting.

CHAPTER XI

A Car That Terrified Him—The One Thousand Horse-Power Sunbeam at Daytona—A New World's Record

The following year, 1927, was one of the most eventful in Segrave's whole life. During it, he made motoring history that will stand for all time, for he was the first man ever to travel at 200 miles an hour on land. He was also the first man ever to drive a motor-car with the colossal output of one thousand horse-power.

Both the car and the speed which it attained were something which, up till then, had been deemed utterly impossible. All the scientific calculations which had been made from time to time had shown that it was only possible to contemplate a speed of 180 miles an hour. Beyond that figure, whoever attempted it would be plunging into unknown fields of danger in which anything might happen.

His record of 153 m.p.h. at Southport had already been eclipsed by two other racing drivers. Mr. J. G. Parry-Thomas, with his monster 500 h.p. car, had put up the record to 174 m.p.h. This had

finally been beaten by Captain Malcolm Campbell with his own Bluebird car.

Mr. Coatalen, the Sunbeam designer, whose agile and ingenious brain is always seeking for fresh automobile worlds to conquer, had already revolutionized motor car designing by creating a small car of approximately thirty horse-power, which had attained over 150 miles an hour.

Segrave suggested to him that they should now build a car to do 200 miles per hour. Mr. Coatalen thought the matter over and said: "I have shown what we can do with a small super-efficient engine. We will now take a car of unlimited horse-power, say a thousand, and go all out for an undreamt-of speed."

Now it is all very well to talk airily about building a thousand horse-power car, but it must be remembered that the problem is not to build an engine of such a terrific power, but to contrive a means of fitting it into a car. The problem seemed insuperable. Mr. Coatalen, however, hit on the inspired idea of splitting the engine into two units and putting one into the front of the car and one into the tail. In collaboration with Captain Irving, one of the most brilliant brains in the automobile world, he designed the famous one thousand horse-power Sunbeam which was to set the name and fame of Segrave, and of the British motor car industry, on a peak unassailable by the rest of the world.

This, however, was not the end of the trouble. It was one thing to design the car and the engine, but as we have said before, another and an equally vital factor has to be considered in these matters. That factor is the strength of the tyres. The construction of tyres to stand up to the speeds which Mr. Parry-Thomas and Captain Campbell had already achieved, had caused the tyre manufacturers endless pains and trouble. It seemed almost as though the limit of strength had been reached. But just as Britain possesses the most brilliant brains in the fields of motor car design and construction, so does she also possess a group of men in the tyre industry whose ability is also unequalled elsewhere in the world.

The outstanding figure in this group is Sir J. George Beharrell, the managing director of the Dunlop Rubber Company. Sir George gave his whole time and attention to this new problem. Finally, he said to Segrave: "If you will give the Dunlop Company time in which to work out the problem involved, I think we can produce the tyre. But we shall only do so if we feel absolutely satisfied that they are capable of standing up to the enormous strain which will be put upon them."

Several months went by. Meanwhile, the big car was being built at Wolverhampton. Segrave went to see Sir George one day. Sir George said:

MAJOR SEGRAVE, AND COMMODORE GAR WOOD, THE AMERICAN SPEEDBOAT "KING"

Well, we have built you a set of tyres, and I can guarantee you with safety that they will last for three and a half minutes, travelling at two hundred miles an hour. But that will be the end of their life. We cannot say what will happen after the three and a half minutes are up."

Travelling at 200 miles an hour, one can cover a mile in 17½ seconds, so that if this time is doubled for the run down a course and back again and a minute and a half allowed for the extra minute in which the driver has to get up speed, it will be seen that the tyres were equal to the task. But they did not allow any great margin of safety for a cautious or indecisive driver.

It is interesting to remember that the Dunlop Company took so much trouble over these tyres that they actually built a special machine which swung them round at over 200 miles an hour in the process of testing.

Soon after Segrave went down to the Sunbeam works at Wolverhampton to see the engines of the car run "all out" in a test. He confessed afterwards that it was the first time in his life that he had really doubted his ability to control a motor car. He really felt a little frightened.

The enormous body of the engine was gripped in a vice-like contrivance with its wheels off the ground. The whole thing looked like a nightmare. The engines were started up and the building

shook. No words can describe the unimaginable output of power which the thousand horse-power machinery seemed to catapult into the building. It was one continuous deafening roar—titanic in its volume—terrifying in its strength. The very walls shook, while the tiles on the roof seemed to chatter.

The wheels were spinning round in semi-visible blurs at over 210 miles an hour. Even so, they knew that the engines were not putting forth their full output.

Segrave stood and stared at it in stupefied fascination. It seemed more than man could control, more than man had dreamed possible. Racing cars he had seen and driven by the score —but this was not a car like any made before. It was a mechanical nightmare, a robot which seemed likely to conquer the humans who had made it.

But it was not like him to contemplate defeat for long. Within a few minutes, while the engines still roared, the building still shook, he had decided that he was going to master this fearful fount of power, to drive it at a speed deemed impossible.

The car when completed was twenty-eight feet long and weighed nearly six tons packed in its crate. It had been decided that the attempt was to be made at Daytona Beach, Florida, where an enormous stretch of almost perfectly flat sands

extends for 23 miles along the shore of the Mexican Gulf. Daytona itself is a pleasant, live, up-to-date American town, fully conscious of its position as the Mecca of the speed world, and fully determined to welcome the young Englishman with that marvellous hospitality and generosity for which the United States are famous.

Most of the local arrangements were in the hands of the American motor racing authorities, who, it deserves to be recorded, have set the world an example in efficiency of organization and in good sportsmanship.

The moment the car was packed into its enormous crate, it was sent down to Southampton to be shipped on board the Cunard liner which was to take it to America. The night before Segrave was due to sail, the Cunard Company rang him up to say that they were very sorry but they had no crane at Southampton large enough to put it on board the liner. This gives some idea of its enormous size. The difficulty was overcome by hiring the Southern Railway's floating crane and tug which successfully swung it on board.

A good many technical difficulties concerned with the timing and recording of the record had arisen between the English and American authorities, but these were all smoothed over by the joint efforts of Mr. Valentine Haresnape of the American Contest Board and of Colonel Lindsay Lloyd of

Brooklands, Colonel Mervyn O'Gorman and Commander Armstrong of the R.A.C.

Finally, on March 2nd, 1927, Major Segrave sailed for America with the car and its crew, accompanied by Lord Rossmore, Mr. K. Lee Guinness and Mr. N. H. Freeman of the Dunlop Company. Twenty-one crates full of spare parts were carried with them.

Three days out from England the ship was wirelessed the terrible news that Major Segrave's old friend and rival, Mr. J. G. Parry-Thomas, one of the finest sportsmen that ever lived, had been killed in an accident which wrecked his car on Pendine Sands in Carmarthenshire, where he was attempting to set up a new world speed record. It was not a cheerful send-off.

Mr. Parry-Thomas's giant car, in which he had set up so many records, was buried in a grave on the sands that had seen his death. This last tribute to his memory followed the example set when Captain Richard Howey's great white Ballot car had been dropped into the sea from the deck of a steamer off Boulogne, after the terrible smash in which he was killed the year before.

Segrave's fame had gone before him to America like a trumpet-call. The whole United States was eager to see and welcome this astounding young Englishman who had defied death and laughed at danger on all the race tracks of Europe, and who

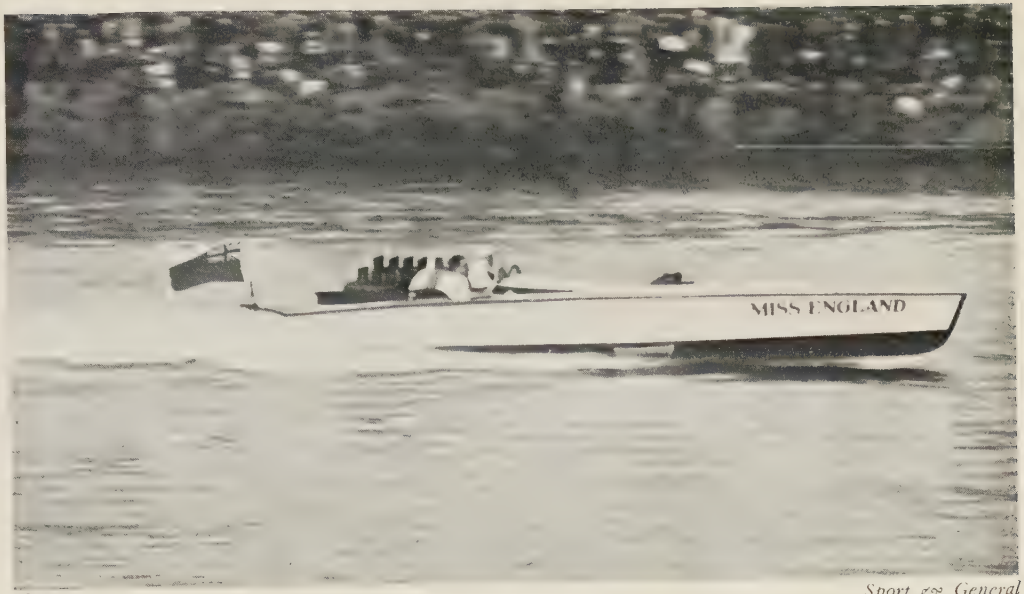


Photo *Sport & General*

SIR HENRY, DEMONSTRATING IN MISS ENGLAND ON THE THAMES AT CHISWICK

now was to fling down a challenge to speed which most men said could only result inevitably in death.

As the liner steamed into New York harbour, the syrens of miles of shipping screamed and whistled a welcome to the bravest young man of Britain. He had come to uphold the prestige of a nation, which, although it is often accused of being old, tired and effete, was to demonstrate that it is still capable of leading the world where the risks are greatest.

The dock sides were black with dense masses of cheering people. Flags and bunting flew from ships' masts and the windows, roofs and towers of warehouses and sky-scrapers.

Scarcely had the steamer docked before Segrave was besieged in his cabin by newspaper men and photographers from every important paper in the United States. He had not even a chance to reach the gangway. Thereafter, for days his life was one long interview.

A fleet of ten Cadillac cars, all carrying Union Jacks, were waiting for them on the dock, and as they were driven to their hotel they were accompanied by an escort of police on motor-bicycles, blowing their syrens to clear the streets. Had a royal guest arrived he could not have had a greater welcome.

Later, a public reception for him was held at the City Hall by Mayor "Jimmy" Walker, where

Segrave had to broadcast to the American public, and he made by far the best speech he ever made in his life. The cars were again escorted, both going and coming, the streets being cleared for free passage.

Some newspapers attached special representatives to him with all the circumstance of diplomats. They followed him by train and by car, took special suites in hotels and spent money like water.

He departed for Daytona by sea, but landed at Jacksonville and went on by road in his own standard three-litre Sunbeam touring car, which was capable of 90 miles per hour on the open road. America at that day had seen nothing like this car. It looked like, and was, an ordinary touring car, such as any rich man might drive to his office—but it could travel at a mile and a half a minute.

Miles out of Daytona, Segrave was met and greeted by a line of cars containing the chief dignitaries of the town. Special squads of armed police, with pistols at their belts, roared along the road behind on fast motor-cycles. Segrave invited one or two of the chief bigwigs into his car. They took their seats, and, opening her out, he let her rip along at a cool mile and a half a minute over a straight stretch of road. It never for a moment crossed his mind that this was anything out of the ordinary. High speed on a clear road

was normal to him. The following cars and motor cycles faded out behind in a blur.

Suddenly, Segrave noticed that his passengers were gazing wide-eyed at the speedometer needle and raising their eyebrows at each other. "Are we really doing ninety miles an hour?" he was asked.

"We are," Segrave replied. "I might get a bit more out of her if you like."

"No thanks," the passenger replied with a grin, "this is quite enough. There's no touring car in America which can do this. Perhaps it's just as well for you and your speed-cops," he added, turning and smiling to another passenger.

Segrave inquired who the other passenger might be. "Oh, he's the Chief of Police!" was the reply.

They arrived in Daytona, having waited for the other cars to catch up with them, and then formed up in a line with a squad of motor-cycle police on each side and drove down to the beach.

A crowd, estimated at 40,000 people, greeted him with a roar of cheers, while a long, black line of camera-men were clicking their machines at him like maxim guns.

After the official welcome by the Mayor and Corporation of Daytona, Segrave went down to look at the sands, and realized at once that they were ideal for his purpose. All the preliminary details were gone into, and a garage was arranged

for the big car which had been sent overland by rail. He had intended to bring it by sea, but this was impossible, as the coasting steamers had no hatchways big enough to take such a crate.

The next day Segrave suddenly realized that his car had not arrived. Frantic telephone messages were sent all up the railway trying to discover its whereabouts. No one could find it. For two days the search continued. Segrave pictured another sequel to his Italian mishap. On the second day came a message to say that the car had been safely located at Savannah. It was rushed through to Daytona by special train and was greeted at the station by an enormous crowd of people, who flocked to see the monster that was like no other motor car ever built.

A gasp of astonishment went up as it was uncrated and its enormous proportions were revealed. Twenty-eight feet in length and flaming red, with the Union Jack painted on either side, its body almost touching the earth, its nose and tail bluntly rounded, and its wheels set into the steel casing of the body, it looked more like a long, low building on wheels than a motor car. The tiny cockpit and the still tinier blob of the driver's head seemed fantastic. It was incredible that one man could drive so huge a machine, unleash such terrific power.

The excitement when the car was taken out for

its first practice run was intense. Thousands of people assembled each time and the sand-hills facing the sea were black with them for miles.

The course was marked out by stout flag-posts three to four inches thick, set up at regular intervals of one hundred yards apart.

The great car, roaring like a shell in mid-air, flashed over the sands at 166 miles per hour on the first practice run—whereupon an enterprising American newspaper came out with the following graphic headlines: "Mystery Car Hits 166 Mile Clip in First Test—British Speed Ace Confident He will Blow Records Sky High."

In January, 1927, the world was startled by the opening of the beam wireless telephone to New York, at that time by far the longest distance ever attempted, but in the middle of March the United States Government installed special instruments at Daytona, some 2,000 miles further, so that the attempt on the record could be broadcast.

On March 23rd, the telephone people were notified that next day, March 24th, a telephone call would be put through to Daytona from the house of Segrave's father in London. Would they please arrange it?

The cost in those early experimental days was prohibitive, viz., £18 for each three minutes. Nowadays, of course, it has come down to a tithe of that figure and become a commonplace.

Mr. Segrave was told that the call would come through at 12.30. Two men were sent to his house to test his telephones. One went to the library and the other to the room below and they talked to each other *via Glasgow* (over 800 miles of wire). Having made some adjustments they passed everything as perfect.

Next day at 12.40 the call came through, "Daytona calling", and a moment after: "Hullo there! Major Segrave at this end, who is that?" And then ensued a conversation of such clearness that it might have been carried on in the same room.

Segrave had just come back to his hotel from doing his first trial of the car, and had done the mile at a speed of 166 miles an hour on less than three-quarter throttle. He was very jubilant over its behaviour and the splendid speed track the beach made, beyond anything he had ever imagined. He said that he felt no doubt at all that the 200 miles an hour, which he had set out to do, would be an accomplished fact when he went for the record next day.

On the next practice run the car did 180 miles an hour and Segrave came nearer killing a man than he had ever done in his life. The man was a motor-cycle police patrolman and his business was to ride up and down at the side of the track, keeping the crowds back. Segrave's car was hurtling up the track, his whole faculties concentrated on

keeping it on a straight course, when he was horrified to see the policeman rushing towards him at what must have been quite 70 miles an hour, well out on the track.

There was barely time to think. He dared not change the course of the car at that speed. It would probably have skidded and turned turtle. Surely, he thought, the man will have the sense to pull in towards the crowd.

He pulled out, straight in front of him and towards the sea. Segrave almost shut his eyes. The policeman was half a mile away when he pulled up, but the car was on him in ten seconds.

Segrave expected to hear the crash of impact, to see bits of man and motor-cycle flying sky-high, and to skid into the sea or into the crowd. Instead, he caught a sudden flying blur of blue by the side of the car.

He had missed the policeman by inches. The next instant the policeman plunged at full speed into the sea, the most frightened man in America —but unhurt.

Had the car hit him at that speed there would have been practically nothing left, either of him or of his machine. He would have been struck at an approaching speed of something over 250 miles an hour and he would have been pulverized.

Segrave was quite confident, as we have said, that he had reached 180 miles an hour on this test

run, but when he pulled up and got out of the car, he was astonished to learn that the official time was only 166 m.p.h. He immediately cabled to England for certain information, the result of which, when he received it, was that he made some alterations. Had these alterations not been made he always said that he would have reached an even higher speed than that which, on the great day itself, eventually set up the world's record.

What had actually happened was that some of the crowd had walked and driven their cars over the timing strips which were laid across the sands at the beginning and end of the measured mile. This had upset the timing with the result that when they came to check Segrave's time they found various speeds recorded from 166 m.p.h. up to the incredible figure of 280 m.p.h. ! Consequently, they decided that the wisest thing to do was to announce the lowest recorded speed.

This test run had shown him, among other things, that it would be impossible for him to drive the car at 200 miles an hour unless his head were completely protected from wind pressure. The pressure, even on the practice run, was about 150 pounds on his forehead. His goggles and crash helmet were almost torn off his head.

Meanwhile, the wind had shifted and had set up one or two ripples in the sand, which made it unsafe for really high speed work. This gave a

week's respite, during which time he and his mechanics worked hard at various alterations to the car, one of which was the erection of aluminium sheeting round the cockpit. This gave him an almost airtight compartment to sit in. Finally, on Sunday, March 27th, a date was definitely fixed, two days hence, for the great attempt to be made.

CHAPTER XII

The First Man to do Two Hundred Miles an Hour—Skidding Broadside at 3½ Miles a Minute—The Feat That Made the World Gasp—Mr. Rockefeller's Dimes.

On Tuesday morning, March 29th, 1927, Daytona sands were closed to the public early in the morning and at 9.30 a.m. the monster car arrived on the course. Major Segrave, clad in spotless white overalls from head to foot, outwardly as cool as a cucumber, but with a dancing light in his eyes, climbed into the tiny cockpit which swallowed his body until only the round blob of his head was visible, and proceeded to a point known as Station 9 on the course.

The sands were smooth, the sea was quiet. A fresh wind was blowing. For miles the sand-hills along the beach were packed by black masses of people. Thousands upon thousands of motor cars lined the course—hundreds of cameras clicked. Cinema men by the score whirled their handles. A confused murmur of voices, like the hum of a vast hive of bees, made a murmurous wave of sound all down the miles of that shining beach of

dazzling sand. Above all rose the deep menacing roar of the thousand horse-power engine that was driving the gigantic white car towards Station 9.

The roar of the engine deepened. The great car, already travelling at high speed, seemed to leap forward and swoop down the sands—a passing blur so swift that the eyes of the onlookers could not even distinguish the Union Jacks painted on its sides, let alone the tiny, white, flashing spot in the middle of the car that was the top of the driver's crash helmet.

Suddenly, to the horror of the spectators, the car swerved, seemed to skid and swept broadside-on into the line of flag-poles. For nearly half a mile it hurtled like a bullet, sideways-on, cutting down the flag-poles like blades of grass.

Then, by a superhuman effort, Segrave righted it and the monster roared off into the distance. When those flag-poles were examined afterwards it was found that the stout four-inch thick wood had been shaved off as sharply as if done by a razor.

A moment or two later the roar of the engine rose again out of the far distance and the car came flying by up the track, a mere rushing blur with a sandstorm billowing in its wake. At that tremendous speed even the slightest gust of wind could deviate the car from its course. This was what caused it to swerve into the flag-posts.

When Segrave tried to pull up he found that the brake shoes melted and ran into liquid metal, so fierce was the friction set up. He could not stop the car!

There were three alternatives—to keep straight on and run into the Halifax River which crossed the beach miles ahead, to turn right and crash into the sandhills, or turn left and go into the sea. He chose the sea.

In a cloud of spray, flung a hundred feet high, the car ploughed into the breakers and gradually slowed up. It was a bold experiment. Even a few yards deviation from her course would have taken her out of the depth of eighteen or twenty inches of water into which he ran, into water so deep that it would have either damaged the car or caused an explosion.

When Segrave returned to the starting point, in a thunder of cheers, he learned he had broken all world's records with an average speed of 203.841 miles an hour.

He got out of the car with his face burnt red and brown by the fierce blast of the wind, while his wrists were strained and bruised with the effort of holding the steering wheel firmly.

Even then he was not content. He wanted to fit steel scoops over the wheels and go back over the course again, as he felt certain that the car was capable of at least 215 miles an hour.

Photo *Sport & General*

SIR HENRY SEGRAVE IN MISS ENGLAND

Lee Guinness and his mechanics rebelled; they practically went on strike. They refused to do another thing to the car because they thought that another attempt would end in disaster.

After the race Segrave was presented to that amazing old man, the wizard of world finance, Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Senior, one of the richest men history has ever known.

Mr. Rockefeller, old, lined, and historic, with his aged eyes still alight with the fire that had made him a Napoleon among men, shook the young Englishman warmly by the hand and then presented him with four newly-minted dimes—roughly about one and eightpence.

Rockefeller dimes are historic. Mr. Rockefeller has some of them specially minted for him each year at the American Mint. He presents one each to the men whom he considers have accomplished the greatest feats of the year.

A Rockefeller dime is one of those eccentric little honours which the recipient treasures perhaps more fondly than he would any honour of the State. The four which he gave to Segrave represented one for his stepmother, one for his wife, one for his father, and one for himself.

Segrave valued those tiny coins as much as any trophy he ever won.

The Press of the whole world went wild with enthusiasm over Segrave's amazing feat. Head-

lines in every language worth printing told the astonished nations how the young Englishman had defeated fate and confounded the pessimists. Actually, during the run, he had at one moment achieved a speed of just over 207 miles an hour.

The most was made of this by the ingenious headline writers of the American Press :

"HUMAN BULLET FLASHES OVER SANDS IN BLUR —HITS 207 M.P.H. CLIP IN ONE RUN— BRITISH 'HUSH-HUSH' CAR FASTER THAN THOUGHT—U.S.A. FEELS PRETTY SLOW"

Another newspaper announced :

"BRITISH SPEED KING HURTLES OVER SANDS AT 200 MILES AN HOUR—DIVES INTO SEA AND MISSES DEATH BY HAIRSBREADTH— HUMAN PROJECTILE THINKS IT 'PRETTY GOOD' "

Yet another headline announced :

"70,000 AMERICANS (AND JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER) THRILLED BY BRITISHER ON BRITISH CAR"

Segrave was variously described as "The Bullet-Boy"—"The Human Shell"—"The Dynamite Driver" and "The Fastest Man Alive". Mrs.

Segrave, in a speech at one of the many public banquets given in his honour, naïvely remarked that although she was the happiest wife alive it was none the less true to say that her husband was "The fastest man on earth".

Segrave confessed, after the attempt was over, that he found it practically impossible to control the car at $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles a minute, but he was quite confident, in spite of this, that the day would come when not only that record would be broken, but that similar speeds would become almost normal on specially constructed motor roads, linking great cities.

"At top speed my vision was blurred," he said, "even with my goggles on. Nevertheless, I am confident that with less wind I could have got ten miles an hour more out of the car."

"When two hundred miles an hour becomes the normal speed of travelling," he added, "there will have to be a new braking system, new steering gear and a different distribution of weight than at present. With the present equipment there is practically no control over the machine at that speed, or at least it answers so slowly as to make controls all but useless. It looks to me as if some sort of oil-braking system will have to be developed for high speeds."

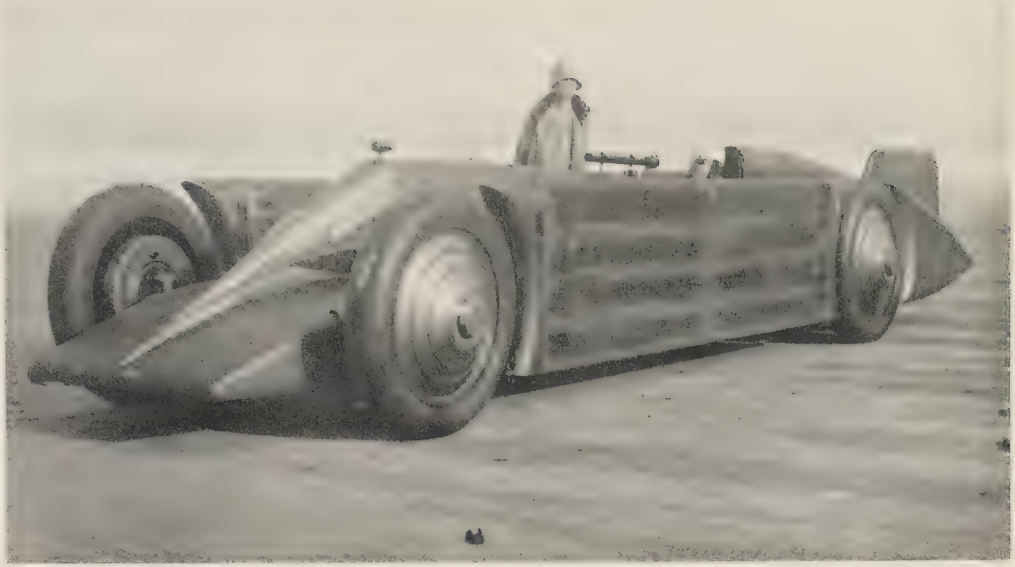
Almost immediately after the record had been accomplished, Segrave announced that he would

retire from motor racing for good, unless a foreign driver and car broke his record, in which case he would attempt to recapture the record for England.

He packed up his belongings and bidding farewell to America after a whirlwind round of cheers, banquets and luncheons, sailed for England with the ten thousand pound car which had made history.

An enormous crowd gathered at Southampton Docks to welcome him when the liner *Berengaria* steamed in. He was met by his wife, his father and mother, the Mayor of Southampton, representatives of the Royal Automobile Club, the Sunbeam Company and apparently half the population of the city. His reception both in Southampton, London, and every other town he visited was the greatest expression of national hero-worship which had been seen since the War. England had at last found a man who touched the imagination, who put romance into everyday life, who kindled anew the flame of adventure and set old men and boys alike dreaming of the reckless deeds that are asleep in the blood of all men.

It was characteristic of him that this admiration and hero-worship, the continual banquets, speeches, presentations and luncheons made no impression whatever on his natural charm and modesty of manner. He remained fresh and unspoiled. He kept his head. Nor did that head swell. Above all,



MAJOR SEGRAVE AND HIS WIFE WITH THE "GOLDEN ARROW"
Note the telescopic "sight". This photograph was especially taken for and presented to Mrs. Segrave by the American Press Photographers at Daytona

in the midst of his new-found blaze of glory, riding on the crest of a great wave of national popularity, he did not forget nor cease to emphasize, in every speech he made, the fact that his success had been largely due to those humble, unsung heroes, his crew of mechanics.

One other example of outstanding bravery, which the world was not slow to recognize, was that set by the wife who had stayed at home. Mrs. Segrave, the most devoted wife that any man ever had, supported her husband in this great crisis as she had always done, by calm encouragement and rigid forbearance from anything which might upset his nerve or poise of mind. Her own mental agony can only be left to the imagination. What she suffered, not only on this occasion but on many similar, is something which the ordinary person cannot easily visualize. It is easy, however, to realize how an hysterical wife, or one given to nerves or tears, would have probably wrecked the chances of so highly strung and vital a personality as Segrave.

Although he had announced that he would retire from motor racing, it is not likely that Segrave ever fully intended to do so. He probably had made his announcement in perfect good faith, but the fact remains that those who knew him well realized that he would never rest content until he had set the record even higher. This unconscious

striving towards new goals was made manifest in the many speeches and articles which he was called upon to make and to write, in the weeks after his arrival home.

In practically every one he stressed the point that speed was only yet in its infancy, that the two hundred miles an hour car would one day become a vehicle for the ordinary man on the ordinary straight motor road of the future.

"I do not believe any man will ever design a machine so fast that it will be beyond the control of a human being," he said in January, 1928.

That phrase was the text of his whole life. He was always exploring the unknown, probing the future, seeking to conquer the known, to explore the uncharted. Once a thing had been accomplished, the next obvious thing to do was to better it. Thus he would have gone on. Had he not been killed at Windermere, it is quite certain that he would, before long, have attempted to beat the world speed record of over 330 miles an hour in the air.

Heaven only knows where he would have stopped. Certainly Segrave himself could not have told you. His whole mind and soul was devoured by a restless flame of endeavour. Everything he did had to be analysed and examined, tested and proved in every detail, until all the groundwork was secure for another leap forward to be made.

Fear, in the ordinary sense, he never knew. One of the things he was most frequently asked when he returned home from Daytona was whether he had been frightened. Quite frankly and honestly he would answer: "No." He usually added that he had been frightened of the engines when he first saw them running all out in the shed at Wolverhampton, but never frightened of the car when it was completed.

His only fear in America was the fear of ridicule. Mr. Coatalen and Captain Irving, with that calm assurance with which the British mind constantly astonishes the world, had quietly, but quite definitely, announced that the car they had designed would attain 200 miles an hour. Thousands of people, not only in America but in this country, frankly did not believe it.

Segrave felt acutely that the onus of upholding this declaration of faith in British workmanship rested on him, and him alone. If he failed he would have let down not only the two men who, because of their faith in him, had staked their professional reputations upon his abilities, but he would also have shown the world that he was incapable of driving the car all out.

He succeeded, as he nearly always did succeed in whatever he set out to do. It was a success in no sense fortuitous, in no sense a matter of luck. Every bolt, nut, rivet, screw and ounce of metal

in the car was British. The man who drove it was British. It was a supreme triumph for Britain.

And one last story before we conclude the history of that first eventful run. Shortly after he had returned to England, de Hane Segrave was lunching one day at a small private party given in his honour by Mr. Wentworth Day in a tiny flat overlooking St. James's Palace. Five famous men had gathered to do him honour—Mr. Ralph D. Blumenfeld, Editor-in-chief and Chairman of the *Daily Express*; Major General "One-Armed" Sutton, the D'Artagnan of the present day and Commander-in-Chief of the Manchurian Armies; Commander Sir Denis Burney, the inventor of the airship R.100; Mr. Charles B. Cochran; and Lord Castlerosse. Each of the first four, in his sphere, has made history, faced great risks. Each was younger than Segrave. Yet, as though by common consent, each one asked him the same question: "Weren't you frightened?"

"No!" Segrave replied.

"But haven't you ever really been frightened, de Hane?" Mr. Blumenfeld asked.

"Yes," he replied, "often, but the worst time was when I went up to Hannen Swaffer's flat one night and he made the piano go up to the ceiling! It happened at one of his spiritualistic seances. That scared me stiff. If I'd had any hair it would

have stood bolt upright. I looked for wires and gadgets, examined the walls, floors and ceilings. I could find nothing. And then he did it again. So I collected Doris (Mrs. Segrave) and went home. That sort of thing is too much for me."

CHAPTER XIII

His First Plunge Into Business—Eight Thousand Pounds a Year—The Daytona Record Eclipsed —A Challenge from America—He Goes Out for New Land and Water Records.

Almost immediately on his return to England, Segrave was besieged with offers from newspapers and business concerns, all of whom wished to employ him in different capacities. It was typical that, although he had never been in any business but that connected with motors, he weighed the pros and cons of all his chances, and finally decided on a career which, on the face of it, was bound with ordinary luck to have brought him a fortune. It was no less than the post of what may be described as chief salesman to the big combine of cement marketing companies, of which Mr. Henry Horne, the millionaire of the moment, was the head. Segrave was offered a salary of several thousand a year, which, with other emoluments from various sources, brought his income to well over eight thousand a year. This was not bad for a young man who only a few years before had not had more than a few hundreds to bless himself with.

Like everything else he did, he plunged heart and soul into his new job. He studied it from every possible angle and before long knew more about cement and its possibilities than many men who had spent their whole lives at it.

In the midst of all these new activities he still maintained a strong love for his old game of speed, with the difference that whereas in the past it was speed on land, he was now casting his eyes on the possibilities of speed on water. As yet it was but a half-formed idea, but it was to lead to a great and tragic ending.

His strength of character and spontaneous charm of manner made him probably the best salesman that cement has ever had. Week after week, month after month, he was meeting the great financial magnates of the country, talking cement, selling cement, preaching cement. His success was phenomenal.

With his immediate grasp of the salient facts of any problem, he at once saw, what no one else had as yet thought about very definitely, that the future of cement lay very largely as a surfacing fabric for the great new arterial roads which he prophesied would soon cover England in a network.

Many had already been built but in nearly every case the design had not been too good. Following the archaic principles of the old road-makers, the

modern highway builders had cambered their roads with a steep pitch which led to innumerable accidents. Segrave's road sense and experience told him that this was not only wrong but quite unnecessary.

He proceeded to preach the doctrine of flat roads whose surfaces were of the coarsest possible material, drained by tiny runnels, running V-shaped from the centre to the sides.

Meanwhile his rivals were not letting the grass grow under their feet. Captain Malcolm Campbell, with his giant Bluebird car, built very largely in his own garage, lowered the Daytona record by several miles. America, not to be outdone, followed suit.

Popular though Segrave had been in that country, it had naturally rather rankled in the minds of Americans that, although that country possessed the finest speedway in the world, and facilities for practice which were quite unapproachable in this country; although she was aiming to capture the world's motor car market; although her whole national slogan was summed up in the one word "speed", yet this country had sent out a man whose years of experience were far less than those of many of the American speed kings, and had, under their own noses, set a record nearly fifty miles in advance of the best their own men could do.

There were two chief challengers to Segrave's record in the United States—Mr. Frank Lockhart, in a new car known as the Stutz Black Hawk, and Mr. J. M. White, a Philadelphia millionaire.

Frank Lockhart, one of the best sportsmen that ever lived, eventually killed himself in his attempts to win the record for America. Mr. J. M. White actually produced a car which did so. This car was probably the oddest thing ever seen on the road. Mr. White was rich and believed in brute force. He designed a car which epitomized these two characteristics. It was christened the White "Triplex". It was high off the ground, blunt-nosed, huge, and cumbersome in appearance. It made no attempt at stream lining, or any of the scientific niceties which Mr. Coatalen and Captain Irving between them had embodied in the marvellous 1,000 horse-power Sunbeam. It looked like an engineer's nightmare. Yet this monster, with its thirty-six cylinders, generating terrific power, actually lowered Captain Campbell's record by a mile. This was done at Daytona Beach by Mr. Ray Keech, one of the finest drivers in America.

The news was no sooner cabled to England than Segrave determined to lower this new record. He had been content to let matters rest while Captain Campbell held the honours for Britain, but the moment they passed into the keeping of

another country, he felt it a challenge which could not be refused.

Plans were at once laid for the design of a new car which should not only beat the American record by a margin, but by at least 20 miles. Segrave's actual ambition was to obtain 240 miles an hour. He believed in round figures, and he wanted to be the first man on earth to travel at 4 miles a minute, just as he had been the first man to travel at 200 miles an hour.

The greatest secrecy was observed about the new car. No one except those directly concerned was allowed into the shed at Kingston, where it was being constructed. The details of its design were guarded as closely as those of a new super-dreadnought. Segrave refused absolutely to discuss the question with anyone. Here again the infinite sides to his character were shown, for although he could be boyish, charming and seemingly ingenuous, he could at the same time fob off pertinacious questioners with a disarming ease which left them wondering whether he was not really rather charmingly simple-minded. They seldom realized that they were being quietly but firmly put in their places.

It was whispered that the new car was to be like nothing else ever constructed. This was true. Whereas the 1,000 h.p. Sunbeam had looked like a gigantic blunt-nosed beetle, the new car

was designed on lines never before seen in the whole field of automobile engineering. It had a pointed nose with gigantic flanges at either side, and a straight fin tail like a fish. Its sides were steep and deep, running almost sheer to the ground. The wheels were set in flush with the body.

The whole purpose of this extraordinary design was to overcome wind resistance. Segrave always said that if a motor car of the ordinary design was driven over a certain speed, it would inevitably leave the ground *and fly*! This would be caused by the terrific upthrust of wind beneath the body. The new car was to defeat this danger.

Meanwhile, as the new car was being built, Segrave was busy driving motor boats at high speeds in his spare time. He had determined that when he went to America next time, he would lower not only the world's land speed, but the world's water speed. The record for speed on water had been held for many years by Commodore Gar Wood with his *Miss America* speed boats. Apart from driving his father's motor boats at home and a few desultory runs in other people's launches, Segrave had done nothing on the water, and knew little or nothing about motor boats. Nevertheless he soon mastered all there was to know.

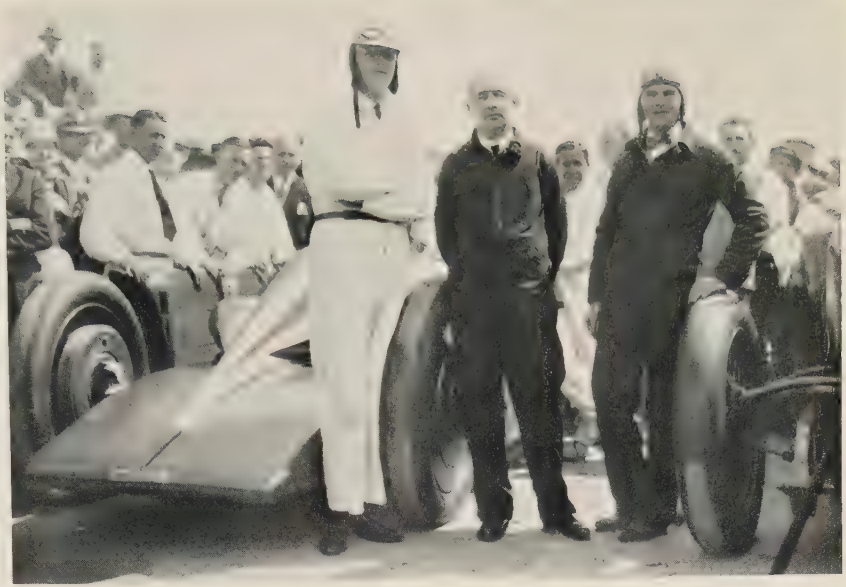
In March, 1928, after practising assiduously with a small outboard motor boat, in which he

overturned and ducked himself thoroughly more than once, he bought a new 60-mile-an-hour super-hydroplane for £1,500, and proceeded to race at various regattas.

Its 200 h.p. engine developed 2,300 revolutions a minute. Its body was painted in black and red, and was stream lined like the fuselage of an aeroplane—even to the lamps. The equipment included fire-extinguishers, cigar lighters, an electric horn, and dynamo lighting and starting. Not an ounce of weight or inch of space was wasted. Even the cushions were disguised lifebuoys. With this boat Major Segrave succeeded in winning several speed boat events. He was as daring on water as on land. It seemed probable that England, which, up to then, had been unable to compete on anything like the same terms with the American speed boat king, was to win new laurels at the hands of this amazing young man.

Before long Segrave improved on this boat with a 500 h.p. boat which he christened *Miss Alacrity*.

We shall never forget being at Cowes on the 11th August, 1928, when the first motor boat race ever run on British waters, at an average speed of 58 miles an hour, took place in front of immense crowds at Cowes Regatta. Segrave's principal rivals were Mr. Gordon Selfridge, Junior, with another boat also engined at 500 h.p., named



SIR HENRY SEGRAVE, MR. J. M. WHITE, AND LEE BIBLE AT DAYTONA IN 1929

Miss Conduct; and Mr. O. Grahame White's *Hotsy Totsy*.

As the starting gun boomed, Segrave's boat seemed to leap suddenly from an approaching speed of 10 miles an hour to well over 60, jumping into the water in a cloud of flying spray. The other boats got away from the mark a little behind him. As usual Segrave was determined to force the pace. For a few seconds the onlookers could see nothing but an immense and whitened sheet of spray, seeming to cover an acre or more of water, from which came the hoarse roar of the tremendous engines. Then from the white cauldron a line of black specks sorted themselves out and raced across the blue waters like seagulls travelling at terrific speed with their feet dangling in the water. The birds' "wings" were the immense clouds of spray swung up from either side of each boat.

Segrave's boat was quite two-thirds out of the water, with its prow high in the air. For the first four miles he was travelling at 70 miles an hour, skating over the water in a dead straight line for the battleship *Rodney*, which was one of the turning points. He had almost reached the warship when engine trouble developed, the steady roar died down, the boat slackened speed, and in a gust of foam Mr. Selfridge's boat shot past, with Grahame White hot on its tail.

The trouble was too serious to be easily remedied,

and Selfridge won at a speed of between 57 and 60 miles an hour, with Grahame White second.

For the next few weeks Segrave was practising continually. To illustrate the thrills of his new sport, we cannot do better than quote a graphic report written at the time by Mr. Harold Pemberton, then Motoring Correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, who accompanied Segrave on August 27th, 1928, when he won the British sea-mile record.

"Donning life-jackets and putting towels round our necks to keep out the deluge, we squeezed into two seats in the stern," wrote Mr. Pemberton.

" 'Life jackets are compulsory,' explained Major Segrave, 'because if you are flung out, you would probably be knocked unconscious. I have had a steel plate fixed under our feet, for if the propeller shaft should come adrift it would probably take our legs off.'

"He pointed to the water, all ruffled with white horses, and threw me a rope to which to cling. Further conversation was cut short by a bellow from the engine, as he pushed the self-starter.

"*Miss Alacrity's* bows rose out of the water and we passed a liner as though it was standing still.

"As we reached the position to cross the mark, Major Segrave pushed the throttle wide open. The idling engine came to life with an

ear-splitting roar, a column of water rose astern, and I felt a bump in the back as *Miss Alacrity* jumped forward. Down came the bows and the horizon opened out.

"In a few seconds the revolution counter showed the engine to be turning over at just on 2,000 revolutions a minute. Then we were going full out, a mile a minute.

"The din was terrific. There was the bellowing of the engine, the hiss of the wind, and a crashing as the leaping boat hit the water with hammer blows.

"Each bump lifted us two feet from our seat. The wind forced its way into our mouths. The flying salt water battered like a box on the ears.

"I looked at the driver, his eyes searching for his landmark. Every muscle of his body was set, his feet pushed hard against the footboard for balance, the muscles of his arms standing out with the effort of keeping *Miss Alacrity's* swaying bows on the course.

"At the turn her bows rose, and I thought she was going to stand on her tail. We shipped a complete wave, but before we had time to take the water out of our eyes and ears, we were going full speed ahead again."

Here the sub-editorial blue pencil seems to have cut a ruthless chunk out of this thrilling description, for the report goes steadily on:

"Major Segrave is getting his hand in for an attempt to do 100 miles an hour, and is building a boat for this purpose. He is also building a car for the world's speed record."

By the next month some of the details of both the new boat and the new car had leaked out. It was known that Segrave was going to use in the car an engine similar to that used in the British seaplane which had just won the Schneider Cup with the magnificent speed of over 330 miles an hour. This engine was rated at 450 h.p., but it had been "hotted-up" to give nearly 1,000 h.p.

It is safe to state now that this engine was obtained for the car largely owing to the personal efforts of one who must be described as a High Personage. This High Personage, himself the ideal of a British sportsman, knew Segrave and had the greatest possible admiration for him. Segrave's attempt was therefore, in every sense, a national reply to the challenge flung down by America.

The tyres, following the experiments which had been carried out by the Dunlop Company when his previous record had been set up, had been designed and tested to stand up to a speed of between 240 and 260 miles an hour.

It was computed that the car would cover a mile at 240 miles an hour in 15 seconds, and that, allowing sufficient time to get up speed and complete

the course, there would not be a safety margin of more than 30 seconds. This, as Segrave said at the time, shows that tyre manufacture had so far practically reached its limits of withstanding the excessive strains set up by very high speeds.

The boat was 26 feet long with a beam of 7 feet, and although of the single-step hydroplane type, she had many unusual features, showing that an entirely new train of thought had been used in her construction.

The big problem that had to be faced was the question of torque—the twisting motion of the propeller which tends to turn a boat over. This was overcome by using a single, very small, two-bladed propeller and making it revolve at the tremendous speed of 6,500 revolutions a minute. Another new feature was the use of two turbines, one fore and one aft, to enable the boat to save many seconds in racing by taking the turns very sharply and at full speed. A third was running the propeller shaft from the engines, which were in the stern, to a gear-box situated right in the bow, and a second shaft back to the propeller, in a sense causing the boat to be pulled instead of pushed. Another was the flexible construction of the hull with rigid engine mountings running through the centre of the boat, but that which tickled the public fancy to an enormous degree was the use of five thousand

ping-pong balls under the decking. In case of a bad accident these balls would give enough buoyancy to keep the boat afloat. They were contained in net bags holding about one hundred each.

Segrave discussed these possibilities with Mr. Wentworth Day in his study one night before he sailed for America.

"I regard travelling at 100 miles an hour on water as just 100 per cent. more dangerous than doing 240 miles an hour on land," he said.

"Anything may happen once the boat gets going at over 80 or 90 miles an hour. She may turn a complete somersault backwards, or she may porpoise—that is, dive straight down under the water.

"If I am flung out at that speed the water will be as hard as concrete. I should be flung against it as though I had hit a brick wall, and be completely pulverized. There is no hope for you at that speed."

Then, laughing at the news which had just been cabled that night, that the authorities at Daytona were including an operating table among their preparations for the race, he told of an incident which had happened to him that morning.

He had been driving his own huge Sunbeam car on a road just outside London, when he approached a deep trench which had been dug

by a gang of navvies. Scaffolding, barrels, heaps of cement and holes were all over the road.

"Whereabouts can I drive without upsetting your digging ?" he asked the foreman.

The navvy gazed wide-eyed at the monster car, then at the driver, and recognizing him, exclaimed : "You 'as my permission to drive where yer blinking well likes, Major—into that bloomin' 'ole, if yer like. I don't suppose it 'ud 'urt *you* !"

"Many thanks, my dear fellow," replied Segrave, and, backing, he went over the trench with the merest bump.

"My cripes, you are a one !" exclaimed the navvy, as the car pulled up the other side.

Mrs. Segrave, who was sitting calmly knitting —preserving that equanimity which has stood her in such marvellous stead—looked up and quietly remarked :

"I can tell you a better story than that. One year at San Sebastian, when de Hane had been racing there, he suddenly announced at lunch that we were going to sleep in Paris that night—Heaven knows how many hundreds of miles away. I settled down comfortably into the car, and the moment we were travelling at over 80 miles an hour—in many places along atrocious roads, unlit, and badly surfaced—I fell asleep. When I woke up we were in Paris !

"But he beat that, when he went to Italy later

on to get the European speed boat record. We left St. John's Wood on the Thursday morning and arrived at Stresa on Lake Maggiore in Italy on Friday night. On the Friday we lunched in France, dined in Switzerland, and slept in Italy! They kept the Customs barrier on the Simplon Pass specially open for us that night, and let us go straight through."

CHAPTER XIV

His Second Daytona Record—231 Miles an Hour —The Golden Arrow—Lee Bible's Challenge and Terrible Death.

In February, 1929, Segrave and his wife arrived in Florida accompanied by two gigantic crates. One contained the new mystery car, the "Golden Arrow", the other the mystery speed boat. It is significant that although Lindbergh had just arrived back at Miami, fresh from his magnificent feat of flying the Atlantic alone, the glamour of his personality was equalled, in the eyes of the American Press, by the arrival of this young man whom the world had come to regard as capable of anything.

Tall, completely bald-headed on top, with only a fringe of the fair hair which, with his steely blue-grey eyes, he inherited from his Viking ancestors, Segrave was received with the acclamation usually given to visiting royalty. Every newspaper in America billed and featured "The British Bullet-Boy".

He arrived at Daytona suffering from a severe cold and with a temperature of 102. He was pale, drawn and ill. Yet in spite of this serious drawback

—for such a man lives on his nerves—he was determined to go out for both records as though he had been in the fittest of health.

"Say, Major, what does it feel like to sit in your new speed car and your new speed boat ?" was the first question shot at him by the spokesman of a regiment of reporters who interviewed him at his hotel.

"I really can't say," Segrave replied casually. "You see, I've never sat in either of them."

"Oh, boys ! Can you beat it ? Isn't that just the ice-cold nerve !" exclaimed the reporter ecstatically. "Get a grip on that ! He comes right over here from England to shoot both these records sky-high, and he has never even sat in either the boat or the car. Isn't that the biggest piece of nerve ever !"

"What you mean is : 'Aren't I the biggest fool ever ?' " Segrave replied laughing.

"But, Major, how dare you do it ?" the reporter asked.

"Well, there's just one reason why I dare," Segrave replied. "You see, both the boat and the car are all-British right through !"

"But haven't you ever raced on land since you hit that 200 mile an hour clip here two years ago ?" the reporter asked.

"No, I haven't," Segrave replied. "I've been earning my living selling cement, and playing about with motor boats."

"Will you be through with racing after this venture ?" he was next asked.

"Yes," he replied, "but first I will stay here until this job is done." His manner, as an American paper remarked, "suggested that the job would be done in short order."

The Golden Arrow was no sooner uncrated than it was seen to eclipse anything ever before imagined in automobile engineering. Whereas the old 1,000 h.p. Sunbeam had been an immense beetle-like creature with a blunt nose, this new car had a pointed nose, with a flange on either side. On top of the bonnet, and immediately in front of where the driver sat in his cockpit, a long telescope was mounted in steel grips.

This telescope caused a sensation. Every reporter in Daytona made it his first question. Segrave had to explain its use a hundred and one times.

The reason for this telescope, which was in reality an equivalent to the telescopic sight often mounted on match rifles, was that Segrave had realized from his previous attempt that as soon as he reached anything like 240 miles an hour, it would be utterly impossible for him to see the finishing point. Any ordinary post would simply become part of the general blur.

He arranged, therefore, for two very high poles to be set up in the sand on the other side of the electric trap wire at the end of the measured

mile, which recorded his speed as the wheels of his car flashed over it. A line was to be swung between the tops of these two poles, and from the middle of the line there was to be suspended a great red lamp. Segrave's idea was to take a sight at this red lamp through the telescope and then aim the car at it exactly as one aims a bullet from a rifle. So long as the red light glowed through the end of his telescope he would know that he was travelling on a perfectly straight course, dead for the centre of the trap-wire.

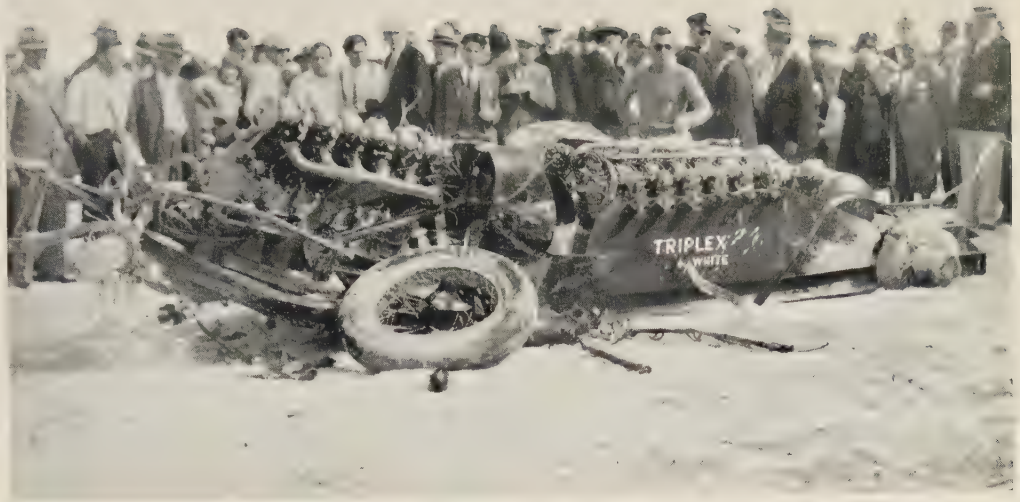
Usually screens are set up on either side of the trap-wire but he realized that there was always the possibility of a skid at the last moment, in which case the screen would probably wreck the car. If, however, the car hit one of the poles, it would simply cut it off like a blade of grass and continue skidding undamaged—as witness his previous adventure with the flag-poles.

His own explanation at the moment was not quite so precisely worded. "I don't want screens," he said, "because it would be such a nuisance if the car should hop all over the shop or do something silly. Think of the mess if she barged into them."

He was asked how far ahead he had been able to see the last time he drove on the beach.

"A quarter of a mile," he replied.

He added that he was to be strapped in the



THE WRECK OF THE GIANT TRIPLEX SPECIAL ON DAYTONA BEACH

car and that the entire centre section was quarter-inch-thick, high tensile steel armour-plate.

When a reporter asked him what he proposed to do in the fortnight which was to elapse between his arrival at Daytona and the actual attack on the record: "Oh," he replied, airily, "it will take a fortnight to put the car together properly. You see, she was only just thrown together for shipping. During that time I'll be looking at the beach. I believe in doing everything myself. You know, you only live once, and it is no use waking up after you're dead and saying: 'I ought to have done that myself—instead of letting Bill Smith do it!'"

It is an extraordinary fact, and one which speaks in no uncertain voice for those responsible for the making of the car, that in its whole life in Florida it made only three runs. The first one in which it just travelled slowly on to the beach to give the camera-men a chance to take all the photos they wanted, then a test to see if the engines were running well in which he attained 183 miles an hour, and lastly the record. Those three runs were the only times the Golden Arrow had run under its own power, and the only times Segrave had ever sat in its cockpit.

On the test run he found that, due to vibration, the telescopic sights were unsuitable, so he discarded them and used rifle sights instead.

Finally, the great day arrived. Early in the morning on March 11th, 1929, 40,000 citizens of the United States lined the long miles of sand-hills which overlook the great beach at Daytona, with the sea creaming on the tide line. Thousands of cars were parked along the sands. Whereas there had been camera-men by the score before, there were now hundreds. Every newspaper, every news-reel and every cinema firm in America had sent its camera-man. Their machines clicked with a whirr like Maxim guns. Scores of flags hung lazily from their poles. Every hotel in the town had sold not only its rooms but the tops of its billiard tables and the spare mattresses on its landings. Hundreds of people camped out all night, and the standard charge was thirty-five dollars per room per night, or, to put it into English money, seven pounds.

At zero hour, under a cloudless blue sky from which the sun blazed down with dazzling intensity, the great golden, torpedo-shaped car, with a dull roar of its engines, rolled up to a point four miles before the start of the measured mile. Suddenly the roar of the engines rose to a threatening bellow. The car leapt forward. It gathered speed every second. It sped over the sand, a thunderbolt of speed, scarcely visible to the people who stood close along the edge of the track. As it swept over the first electric timing plate at the start of the

measured mile, it was travelling at over 231 miles an hour. It was impossible to see the man inside. It was impossible to see the wheels. All that was visible was an immense rushing blur, speeding on with bullet-like directness for the great red bull's-eye that swung between its poles, limned against the hard blue of the sky beyond. In a second, or so it seemed, the car had flashed over the mile and shot over the timing strip as straight as an arrow from a bow. The roar of its engines died into the distance.

Field-glasses and telescopes followed it. The loud speaker announced that Major Segrave had stopped at the end of the course. He got out. He was loading blocks of ice into the immense cooling system of the car. He changed the wheels. He took his seat again. Immediately the roar of the engine rose dully in the distance. The car came sweeping back over the sands, a golden vision shooting like a torpedo beneath the red lamp, skimming over the dazzling course, between the white line of the surge and the black line of the man-clad sand-hills, towards the grand-stands. It swept through shallow pools of water. Clouds of white spray shot up like lace a hundred feet in the air. In a second it was on the grand-stands. In a second it had passed. There was a swoop of sound, an ear-splitting thunder, a tempest of noise that rose from a groan to a roar, from a roar

to a bellow, and then droned away again into the blue distance. It was over.

The figures went up. His time for the first mile was given at the official speed of 231.51125 miles an hour. The time for the second run was given at 231.21387 miles, giving an average two-way speed of 231.36246 miles an hour—or, to put it in plainer English, an average of *a mile in* 15.56 *seconds*.

He had beaten the American record set up by Ray Keech in the gigantic White "Triplex-Special" by no less than 23.81 miles an hour. As one American newspaper said—"in a flaming streak of super-speed Major Segrave has torpedoed our record with a contemptuous bravado which blows it to bits."

Wave upon wave of cheers rose from the grand-stands when the time was announced. Never before had the spontaneous sportsmanship of America been given such tremendous expression. It did not matter that America had been beaten at her own game on her own super speed-track by a man with half the experience of some of her cracks. All that mattered was that a young man had shown the world that man could travel faster almost than human thought—that man could explore the unknown and come out alive—that an Englishman had said he would do a certain impossible thing and had made it possible.

The one person who did not see the run was Mrs. Segrave. She sat in the grand-stand, her head bent down, her hand over her eyes, not daring to look at the golden bullet roaring over the sand, which contained the life and reputation of her husband. Yet she never lost her nerve.

Meanwhile, nearby, on the course, stood Mr. J. M. White's tremendous 36-cylinder "Triplex", a looming, uncouth, ungainly monster, ugly and menacing, ill-favoured and unlikable compared with the slim, terrific beauty of the torpedo-shaped golden car that had just beaten it by over 23 miles an hour. It was, in a sense, a pathetic comparison —the comparison between brute-force and brain, between brawn and beauty.

Even more pathetic was the figure of the man who stood beside the car, the light of tense excitement in his eyes, his lips pressed close together in a white, thin line, his hands clenched nervously. He was Lee Bible, the man who was to drive the great "Triplex-Special" the moment the British record had been set up. America had scarcely heard of Lee Bible till that moment. The world had not heard of him at all.

Lee Bible was a young mechanic of Daytona Beach. He owned a small garage in the town. He was without money, without influence and without much experience. He had a wife, a family and a burning ambition. That ambition was to be

the crack driver of the world, to out-Segrave Segrave.

Mr. White and Ray Keech had parted company. Lee Bible no sooner heard of it than he implored Mr. White to take him on in Keech's place. He was one of many. Mr. White was besieged by applications from every sort and condition of men. Practically every racing driver in America wanted the chance to drive the great ugly car and beat the speed-king from England. There were many men among the scores of applicants who had driven before Bible had even been in a car. There were men who had set up record after record; there were men twice his age and men with twice his experience. Yet Mr. White chose him.

It was expected that the "Triplex-Special" would go out on the beach immediately Segrave had finished his two runs. The crowd waited. It was in no particular mood for fresh thrills, for what thrill could surpass that of the one they had just seen? But it just waited to see. There was something tragic, something pathetic, about this young man with the uncouth car, who was going to risk his life against the golden monster which was the finest product of human brains and human courage.

Presently a whisper ran through the crowd like a wind through a field of corn. The "Triplex-Special" would not start that day. The attempt on the record was postponed till to-morrow. Some-

thing like a sigh of relief went up from 40,000 people.

Segrave went back to his hotel. All that day and half that night he was besieged by Press-men. Would he retire?—Was he through?—Could he have gone faster?—Would he go faster yet?—These were a few of the questions fired at him.

"I am through," he replied. "I will never race a motor car again unless Bible or somebody else outside Britain breaks this record. Then I'll certainly have a crack at sending it still higher. The car can do more yet—she was not full out to-day. I know now that I could get 240 out of her, perhaps more."

Two days later, on the unlucky 13th of March, 1929, Lee Bible drove the great Triplex car to his death. He was killed on the 13th day, just as Segrave died on the 13th of June, the following year.

The great 7-ton car was taken out for a practise run on the afternoon of Wednesday, March 13th. The authorities were not too sure of Bible's ability to control the car. They demanded that he should drive her in several trials to prove his mettle.

At 2.40 p.m. Bible climbed into the cockpit of his enormous machine, and a moment later roared off from Station Zero at an average of 183 miles an hour. The car shot along by the water's edge, sending up huge sheets of spray which mingled

with the black plume of smoke shooting out from its tail. It swept over the mark at the southern end of the course and turned slowly round to prepare for the return run. It gathered speed and came roaring through the timing trap, leaving a thick wake of black smoke.

Suddenly, the hundreds of people who lined the dunes saw the car swerve towards the sand-hills. It shot straight towards Charles Traub, a camera-man who was whirling the handle of his machine. Traub shrieked and started to run. It was too late. The big car hit him. He was swept up like a feather, cut clean in half, smashed to pieces, and flung broadcast over the beach.

The car hit the sand-hills at over 150 miles an hour in a shower of sand and smoke, rolled and bounded over and over for at least 200 feet, and finally stopped with a dreadful crunching crash of splintered steel and iron.

Bible's body flew from the car. The spectators saw it hurtle through the air and land on the sand, sitting bolt upright by the wreck of the car. Then it rolled casually over, as might a man who was tired, and lay still.

There was a moment's sudden, dreadful silence. Then the great loud speaker announced to the sunlit air, in a voice of brass : "The 'Triplex-Special' has crashed. The driver is dead." A woman's screams cut the hum of voices suddenly like a

A 5,000 MILE TALK TO HIS FATHER

Telephoning the news of his record success from Daytona to his father in his library at Hyde Park Square. Mr. K. Lee Guinness is seated on the table

knife. It was the lamentation of Mrs. Bible. Only half an hour before her husband had said: "This is the golden opportunity of a lifetime for me."

A motor ambulance rushed down the beach. A swarm of police streamed out and surrounded the body. Stretcher men leapt out of the ambulance. Within a few seconds, the dead man's body had been driven away.

So ended one of the most tragic and pathetic attempts ever made to break a motor car speed record. Bible was a young man to whom the chance to drive a powerful car seemed to be the key to everything that he most desired in life. He had been born on a farm in Tennessee. He had worked as a railway labourer, as a fireman, as a telephone line man, as a garage mechanic, as a lock-washer and a taxi-driver. He had never driven in a big motor car race. He had driven only in little, unknown races at country fairs all through the Middle West and down into Florida. His wins were not even worth mentioning.

Perhaps because of these things, because of the pathos of that extraordinary challenge to the finest car and the finest driver that the world has ever seen, the world will remember the name of Lee Bible when it has forgotten the names of those scores of other, and far greater, drivers who have died on the race tracks of two Continents.

The beach was in excellent condition, far better than the previous day, and Segrave was waiting, with his Golden Arrow alongside the "Triplex," to try again as soon as Lee Bible had made his run. He was quite confident of exceeding the four miles a minute, the speed which he said he would do before leaving England. But after the accident the trials were declared closed out of respect to Mrs. Lee Bible.

CHAPTER XV

The World's Speed Boat Record—"Miss England I" in America—An Amazing Homecoming—Segrave, The Hero of Britain.

THIS victory, with its tragic sequel, was not Segrave's only success while in America. He had brought his motor boat *Miss England I* out for the purpose of beating the American water-speed record and he proceeded to do so. Remarkable as this fact was in itself, it is still more extraordinary when one remembers that the boat was engined at only 950 h.p. as against the 2,400 h.p. developed by Commodore Gar Wood's enormously powerful *Miss America.*

Miss England I was indeed a wonderful little boat. To begin with she was only 26 ft. in length with a beam of 7 ft. Yet she was fitted with a 12-cylinder Napier-Lion engine, such as had developed such an amazingly high speed during the Schneider Trophy Seaplane Race. This engine was so far the most powerful engine of her weight that had been built in England.

Many people regarded Segrave's challenge to America as a forlorn hope, but he himself was

fully confident. In conjunction with Mr. H. Scott Paine and Mr. F. Cooper, probably the two most brilliant brains in the marine engineering industry in this country, he succeeded in producing a boat which was based upon a propeller performance that was regarded as revolutionary.

It is unnecessary to go into technical details, but it should be pointed out, that here again, Segrave and his two collaborators tackled a problem which had so far been regarded as outside the bounds of practice. They found that the most efficient propeller speed would be developed in the neighbourhood of 6,500 r.p.m.—something quite undreamed of before. There were many technical difficulties to be overcome, but when the boat was finally launched at Miami in March, 1929, Segrave took his seat in the cockpit fully confident of her powers, although he had never actually driven the boat before, or even sat in her.

Commodore Gar Wood's boat leapt straight off from the mark, its engines roaring as they developed more and more power, seeming to drown the voice of the British boat. Nevertheless, Segrave went straight up to a speed of 88.7 miles an hour. It is unnecessary to say a great deal about the race, because Segrave won on points, owing to a breakdown on the part of his opponent, whose boat was clearly faster. But it gave him the championship of the world.

Nevertheless this attempt had been sufficient to show him the capabilities of his own relatively small engine. His mind was already busily at work on planning improvements and modifications whereby the engine could be "hotted up" to give almost half as much speed again.

After these wonderful exhibitions at Daytona and Miami, the Segraves were fêted wherever they went. In Florida, whatever the function, the proceedings were interrupted to allow the band to play "God save the King".

The Americans showed in every way a generous enthusiasm and a hospitality which knew no limits.

From Miami they went to Washington for four days. When starting, Segrave, with his usual love of wheels that go round, had gone up to the front of the train to examine the engine. He was so intrigued with certain gadgets which are not used in England that he persuaded the engine-driver to allow him to drive.

When the train arrived at Daytona the station was packed with the many friends they had made during their stay there, who had come to bid them farewell. Segrave had only just time to scramble back to his carriage to greet them, and there was great amusement when he explained his coal-dusty and greasy appearance.

At Washington invitations again poured in

upon them. The British Embassy, the Canadian Legation, and many others gave dinners for them. The "Daytona Cup" had been brought up specially by Mayor Armstrong of Daytona and was presented to Segrave by Vice-President Curtis and Sir Esme Howard on the steps of the Capitol.

He was then taken to the White House by the British Ambassador to be presented to President Hoover.

As the date of their arrival in New York had been kept secret, he had four days free from all official invitations, a period of quiet which was badly needed. They sailed on April 6th for Southampton.

While the White Star Liner *Olympic*, aglow with a thousand lights, was steaming up Southampton Water approaching the dock, a fussy little tug came up alongside and barged into her side, giving a decidedly bad display of seamanship.

The officer on the bridge looked over the side and let flow some Billingsgate at the skipper which would have done credit to any fishwife. The answer came back:

"We bear a message from the King for Major Segrave, please lower a rope."

It read as follows: "On your arrival home I send you my hearty congratulations on your splendid achievement in winning for Great Britain the world's speed record for motor cars and on

your success in the race for the international speed boat trophy. George R.I."

This was perhaps the most dramatic moment in the whole memorable welcome. Segrave was overcome and said he was far prouder of that message than of anything that had happened in his life.

He and Mrs. Segrave were then called up from their stateroom to the upper deck as the ship came alongside the dock.

It seemed a signal, for suddenly there arose a clamour which grew and grew into a crescendo of deep bass notes of foghorns and the wails of syrens from every vessel in Southampton.

The captain on the bridge said that he had never before seen or heard anything so impressive.

His reception in England was amazing. It eclipsed everything that he had ever known before. It was greater in its volume of spontaneous national appreciation than the welcomes given to many a returning general with victorious battles to his credit.

From the moment that he landed at Southampton amid a blast of wailing ships' syrens and foghorns, he was received and acclaimed as a national hero. Southampton was packed with cheering crowds. Flags, bunting and streamers flew from every house-top. The railway station was deep with masses of cheering people. He was welcomed by

the Mayor of Southampton, the leaders of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, and hundreds of personal friends. A B.B.C. microphone was trained on his least word, and the engine which awaited him in Southampton Station bore across its front an enormous placard bearing the words: "Welcome home, Segrave."

But over and above all this, came an official intimation that he would be knighted at the hands of the King and that the Government would welcome him to London.

The journey from Southampton to London was a triumphal progress. Cheering people lined every station. They leant from windows, and waved hats and handkerchiefs from farmyard gates as the train sped by. Truly he had come home to England, an England which, for once, had woken up and taken notice of the greatness of one of her sons.

At 2.54 in the afternoon, the train drew into Waterloo Station and Segrave stepped from his special saloon to find himself confronted by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Kynaston Studd, an official delegation of welcome, and a crowd, thousands strong, which packed the station and besieged its outer doors. A roar of cheers went up as his face was seen. For a moment, he started and visibly paled. It was more, far more, than he had ever expected. It was one thing to be able

AN "OFF-DAY" AT DAYTONA. NO WONDER HE FELT AMUSED

to understand the enthusiasm of those automobile "fans" who gathered at every race meeting and lionized their own favourites, but this tremendous welcome from the whole nation of Britain was something which had never happened to any other motorist in history. It was unique.

Sir Kynaston Studd, Lord Mayor of London, was the first to greet Segrave and his wife. "I cannot tell you how proud I am," he said, "to welcome you back after a triumph which has won new honour for England and heightened her reputation of progress and courage. Your wonderful records on land and sea have thrilled the Empire."

The Lord Mayor then presented a bunch of red roses to Mrs. Segrave; one of white roses to Mrs. Irving, wife of the designer of the Golden Arrow, and one of carnations to Mrs. Scott Paine, the wife of the designer of *Miss England*.

"I am completely overwhelmed," Segrave replied. "I had no idea that any such wonderful welcome would be waiting for me. I can only thank you from the bottom of my heart for the kind things you have said to my wife and myself, and for arranging this marvellous welcome."

Then he stepped into the first of a long line of waiting cars, and drove out from the station into the falling rain of an April day in London. But even the rain could not dampen his welcome.

Spectators lined the streets, as though waiting for the visit of a royalty. Policemen saluted him, small boys cheered him, and the ordinary everyday Londoner raised his hat and smiled his welcome to the young man who had won the heart of England.

A few moments later, his car, followed by a stream of others, turned into Old Palace Yard, where the official Government welcome was to be given him. Segrave stepped bashfully from the car, rather shyly faced a battery of photographers and film camera-men, and was finally rescued by Mr. Douglas Hacking, the Minister of Overseas Trade, who led him into Westminster Hall, where for centuries the history of England has been made.

There, beneath the high mysterious roof, on the cold stone floor of the oldest Parliament building in England, a building some of whose timbers are of oak, grown in William the Conqueror's day, Segrave was welcomed by the spokesman of his own Government.

"As Minister for the Department of Overseas Trade," said Mr. Hacking, "it is most gratifying for me to know that the Golden Arrow and Miss England are entirely British products. Twenty-nine British manufacturers produced the component parts of the Golden Arrow. They are all to be congratulated on the excellence of British design, British material and British workmanship.

"Under the terrific strain which the Golden Arrow had to endure, one small flaw in the material, one slight error in design, or one trifling neglect in workmanship, might well have resulted in disaster to the enterprise and death to the driver.

"British goods, as usual, stood the test, and I hope that overseas buyers of motor cars in every part of the world will take careful note of the pre-eminence and durability of British production.

"Major Segrave, your latest triumph proves once more, if, in fact, proof be necessary, that courage, calm endurance and determination are still the characteristics of the British race.

"I think also the future Lady Segrave ought to be remembered on this occasion. The anxiety and strain which she must have undergone during this race against time, must have been terrific. She, at any rate, will be truly thankful that the anxiety has been worth while.

"Major Segrave, the Government congratulate and welcome you home."

Then more cheers. Segrave took them manfully, but he looked a little weary. He passed his hand over his brow, and over his eyes, as though he wished that this very marvellous welcome were over.

There was a final cheer as he left the building and got into his car. Then he drove away through the wet and misty gloom of a drizzling London after-

noon at something very much less than 231 miles an hour—a rather tired man, very glad to be home again.

After that, there were, of course, receptions, dinners, dances and invitations without ceasing. He was fêted, feasted and invited here, there and everywhere. He was the lion, not only of the moment, but of the year. The word "Segrave" became a household word, a common term of endearment among bus-drivers and taxi-men. And in England, there is no greater sign of popularity.

But in the midst of it all, Segrave did not forget the workmen at the Napier works, and those others, in their shirt sleeves and overalls, who had put such sterling endeavour into the building of both the car and the motor boat, and by their honesty of workmanship, had not only helped him to win the records, but had preserved his life. He went to all the works, and in charmingly modest, boyish speeches, which endeared him to everyone who met him, he thanked them quietly, sincerely.

Two days after he landed at Waterloo, he was the guest of honour at a great banquet given by the Royal Automobile Club under the chairmanship of Sir Arthur Stanley, at which the toast of Segrave's health was proposed by the Prince of Wales. The Prince had himself expressed a wish to do this.

When the dinner was over, the Prince rose, standing between Major and Mrs. Segrave, and said :

Photo *Sport & General*

MAJOR AND MRS. SEGRAVE HOMEWARD BOUND ON THE *BERENGARIA* AFTER HIS DOUBLE SUCCESS AT DAYTONA IN 1929

"This great achievement by Major Segrave—and great it most certainly is—has to my mind three different aspects. The first of these aspects is the human element as portrayed by the driver of the car. That the task for which Major Segrave went over to America—the establishment of the world's motor speed record for Great Britain—could not fail to be attended by very grave risks is obvious. Indeed, proof of this—and it must have been the only thing which marred the success over on the other side—was the death of the gallant American when he was attempting to beat the present record.

"When Major Segrave left this country two months ago for the States, he was not going out to do a thing which he did not know about. He was not new to the game. He had established records before and the World's Record in 1927. Nobody knew the risk, nobody knew the chance he was taking better than himself, except possibly Mrs. Segrave. He took the chance, and he did that which no human being has ever done before. Thanks to his nerve he has won through successfully.

"When we had grace before dinner, we thanked God for the good dinner we were about to receive, and I could not help saying to the Chairman: 'And thank God Segrave has come back safe.'

"Another aspect of this great British achievement is that the British motor car, the Golden Arrow,

has enabled Major Segrave to put up a world's record that is more than a mere record—it was the British motor manufacturers' challenge to the world. Every item that went to make it up, every item that went to make up this marvellous piece of craftsmanship, was manufactured in this country. The driver, the designer, and all the British staff responsible for the organization and carrying out of this great feat have done nothing else but demonstrate and emphasize what British craftsmanship can do.

"And I know Major Segrave would have me say a word of congratulation to the designer of the Golden Arrow, Captain Irving, who is present to-night, and to the staff of British mechanics who built this car, some of whom went over to America and were able to provide him with such a magnificent and trustworthy article for the job. These things, like the Golden Arrow, do not grow on trees. There are many words one wants to say, but there are great thanks due to Mr. Horne for having made the Golden Arrow possible.

"The third aspect of this achievement is a statistical one. Ever since man walked on his two hind legs, he has been all the time trying to cover the ground at a faster rate than it was intended those two legs should carry him by unaided efforts. Man has always been trying to go fast, and nature has always been trying to stop him. Only a hundred

years ago, man thought he was doing quite well in this unequal contest, when he went from 10 to 15 miles an hour.

"Last month Major Segrave covered a portion of the earth's surface at the rate of 231.36 miles an hour. That statement is rather difficult for those of us to comprehend who do not care, or wish, to drive quite so fast as that. If we were to emulate Major Segrave, we could go from the Marble Arch to the Brighton Aquarium in 13 minutes, 29½ seconds! He was driving so fast, that even the American movie men could not catch him.

"Major Segrave also won the speed boat race. I know that Major Segrave must be weary of these forms of entertainment by now, although he has only been a week-end over here. His performance in America was a very sporting effort, and the successful world record he set up on land for Great Britain entitles him, beyond any question, to the heartiest of welcomes and our warmest congratulation."

Segrave, who was looking less tired and strained than when he had arrived back from America two days before, thanked the Prince and the assembled company in one of the best speeches he had ever made; indeed, as a newspaper said at the time: "It was one of the best speeches that has been heard at a function of this character. It was exactly the right type, struck the right note,

and sounded as though it came straight from the heart."

Segrave made one interesting statement in that speech, which, although it is well known to racing-motorists, is not always realized by the general public. He emphasized the definite feeling of friendship and comradeship which had existed between himself and Lee Bible, whom the world had regarded merely as his rival. Segrave pointed out that in nearly every case, those racing drivers who are rivals are also friends, or, if not actual friends, have the friendliest feelings for each other.

"It is the sport in which there is next to no rancour, nor is there any room," he said, "for shams or pretence between the chief actors in the drama."

He added that Bible had candidly admitted that the huge "Triplex-Special" was difficult to handle when its speed was checked.

"Mr. Bible," he said, "just before the attempt wished me good luck, and I wished him the same.

"He then said: 'I would like to ask you one question. This car of mine in trial runs has a peculiar symptom. After I have been through the measured mile, when I take my foot off it seems to get out of control.'

"I said: 'It will, if you take your foot off. You cannot take your foot off, because if you do, the drag of the wheel will immediately throw the car out of control.'

"He said : 'I shall slow down very slowly.'

"I think that what must have happened is that his foot slipped off the accelerator pedal and decelerated the car too rapidly, with the result that you already know."

Referring to his own feelings during the race, Segrave said : "There is a feeling, which always remains with me, and particularly after this last effort. It is this : When one starts, one feels a gradual unleasing of a tremendous mechanical force under one, and, at the same time, as the car gathers speed, one slowly feels the whole thing gradually getting little by little above human control."

Immediately after their arrival back in London both the Golden Arrow and *Miss England* were exhibited to public view in Messrs. Selfridge's Stores. Segrave's father had a desire to inspect them closely, so, instead of joining the queue, he went round the other way and told the guardian that he was Segrave's father, and supposed it was all right his going in that way. The commissionaire looked at him most suspiciously and said : "Well, you're the fourth father I've let in this morning, but I suppose it's all right."

About a month later the Golden Arrow was sent to Barcelona to be shown in the British section of the Exhibition. Segrave himself drove down to the opening in his fastest touring car. While there

he had the honour of dining privately with His Majesty King Alphonso, who most graciously conferred on him the Order of the White Cross.

He made one of his usual memorable drives back to Paris. The following is an extract from a daily paper :

"Segrave beats fastest express by 6½ hours. Sir Henry Segrave has returned to Paris from Barcelona where his famous car the 'Golden Arrow' is the centre of attraction at the Exhibition.

"Sir Henry motored from Barcelona to Paris, 736 miles, in 16 hours, whereas the Barcelona-Paris express takes 22½ hours. On his arrival, he said :

" 'We had breakfast in Barcelona and supper in Paris. On the way we had two punctures, three stoppages for petrol and two for meals, and we used 86 gallons of petrol. We were travelling frequently at more than 100 miles an hour.' "

CHAPTER XVI

Knighted by the King's Hand—An Historic Moment—Motor Boat Thrills in Germany—Another Championship.

For the next few months Segrave was fully occupied with his business, the plans of a new house near Kingston Hill, and the making of many additions to his wonderful model railway. Soon, however, he started to plan a new motor boat speed campaign in which he hoped to capture, not only the principal events of Europe, but also once more to meet, and more decisively conquer, Commodore Gar Wood's American challenger. With this end in view he entered *Miss England I* for the speed boat championship of Germany, and the championship of Europe at the Lido.

Before going to Germany, however, he was to take part in one other ceremony in England which set the final seal on the long list of his achievements. He was commanded, by the King himself, to present himself at Craigweil House, Bognor, on April 27th, 1929, there to receive the accolade of knighthood at the King's own hands. His Majesty then was still a sick man, slowly recovering from that terrible illness which had almost deprived the

Empire of its head. He saw no one except on important national business. The knighting of Major Henry O'Neil de Hane Segrave was a matter of national importance. The King would receive him at a time when he would not see many a Minister of State.

This gesture on the part of the King, this conferring of a knighthood for the ideal of bravery, which in the early days knighthood was supposed to typify, touched the imagination of the nation. For once knighthood, after a long history of commercial bargaining and political pandering, had reverted to its old splendid status of dignity and honour. When Segrave was knighted, the whole flower of knighthood bloomed again.

Surely the old knights, those grim old fellows, who had won their titles and their honours at the point of the sword, in the heat of battle, in the welter of bloodshed, the clash of nations, must have smiled a little in their dead dreams, when they saw this splendid young figure of bravery and daring take his place in their ranks so much more suitably than many of those who preceded him, who had bought their honours by selling their souls or signing their cheques.

The British public to-day regards nine out of ten of its newly-minted lords with the same quiet cynicism with which it regards its own local town councillor, brewer, or bootmaker who has crowned

Photo *Herbert*

HALLIWELL, SIR HENRY SEGRAVE, AND WILLCOCKS AT WINDERMERE
SHORTLY BEFORE THE END

a successful business career by the purchase of a knighthood.

When Segrave was knighted, knighthood took on anew its old and most honourable meaning. No better honour could have been given him.

It is amusing, even after this short lapse of time, to recall the extraordinary care which the newspapers and news-agencies took in order to be first with the news that Segrave had been knighted by the King. His house, his clubs and his office, were watched by relays of reporters and photographers, as closely as though he had been an international crook under police surveillance. Craigweil House itself was besieged day and night by lynx-eyed pickets.

In the end Segrave defeated his watchers. He drove himself down from London to Bognor in his own great touring car, entered Craigweil House gates amid the cheers of a small crowd of bystanders, and was received by the King in a room overlooking the sea. His Majesty shook hands with him, congratulated him on his wonderful performances, and asked him many questions about the record run.

Then he commanded him to kneel, and tapping him lightly on the shoulder with the blade of a sword, handed to him by one of his suite, said: "Rise, Sir Henry Segrave." The King had honoured Britain's hero in the style he most deserved.

An interesting sidelight on how the fame of his achievements extended over the world is shown by a general intelligence paper set at a Chinese girl's school at Shanghai in June, 1929.

Some of the answers to the most simple questions were unbelievable, yet only one girl failed to answer the question : "Who is Segrave ?"

Segrave was ambitious. Other men might have been content to retire, having thus reached a pinnacle unique in the history of their own particular sphere of action. He had made history. He was part of history. He could rest on his laurels. But this was the last thing he would ever have done. Life to Segrave was a step-ladder—one step merely leading to another until he reached the ultimate top. He had reached the top in land speed. He now meant to reach the top in water speed. After that he was already planning to go to the top in air speed, and, these things having been accomplished, it was safe to say that he would have gone on striving for a new goal, a new ambition, until the very forces and tissues of life within him had given out from sheer old age and exhaustion.

So speed boating was, therefore, the next obvious step. He had gone so far, but not far enough. The world record, won by virtue of an accident, was not good enough. Any world record he was to hold must be a record won, not only in out-and-out,

neck-and-neck competition, but won by a margin which left his rivals hopelessly behind. Everything, as we have said, went by steps in his life—some of them seven league jumps.

The next step was the Motor Boat Championship of Europe. This was due to be raced for on the Templin Lake near Potsdam in Germany. Segrave entered for it. He was confident that his motor boat, *Miss England I*, was capable of beating anything that either German or French challengers had put up. His two chief rivals were expected to be Herr Fritz Von Opel, the motor boat champion of Germany, in *Opel I*, and Dr. E. Etchegoin, the champion of France, in *Sadie II*.

The course on the Templin Lake is 25 miles, run over a circuit of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles. On such a short course cornering is naturally a big feature. Segrave entered for this race largely because he saw straight away that in motor boat racing the victory would lie with him who could corner quickest at high speed. The quicker one cornered the more seconds one saved. And seconds, in any sort of racing, are vital.

He knew already that Dr. Etchegoin had lapped the course at 66.8 miles an hour, while the German champion was supposed to have a somewhat faster boat.

Segrave digested these facts and presently took *Miss England I* down to Southampton. There,

one day in May, the casual strollers along the shores of Southampton Water, and the passengers on passing liners, were astounded to see a small boat hurtling along the surface of the water at a breath-taking speed, purring like a cat, and flinging up a white mountain of spume and spray in its wake.

It was Sir Henry Segrave, clad all in white, sitting at the wheel of *Miss England I*, and sending her shooting over the water on a trial run at the amazing speed of 85 miles an hour—the greatest speed so far then attained on English waters. The little boat flew over the surface of Southampton Water like an arrow, the drone of her engine filling the spring sky. Suddenly, she turned like a snipe, and shot back over the course.

The trial was over. The engines slackened. The white wake of curdled waters died down. The boat purred quietly and slowly into the landing-stage. She glided alongside and stopped. Sir Henry, rubbing the spray from his eyes, stood up in the cockpit, stretched his arms, and climbed quietly ashore. "She travels splendidly. She'll do." That was all.

Just over a week later, *Miss England I* and Sir Henry Segrave were both on the Templin Lake near Berlin. The preliminary heat for the speed boat championship of Germany was about to be raced for. The lake was blue. The day was hot.

Sir Henry and his mechanic were both thirsty. *Miss England I* lay idly on the lake's surface, beneath a blazing June sun. Her rivals were nearby.

Sir Henry suddenly ordered lemon squash. It was really too hot and too thirsty to be running the great 950 h.p. engine when the heat was not yet due to start.

So the engines were stopped, the lemon squash was brought, and all was peace. Suddenly a guttural German voice bellowed at them through a megaphone from the judge's box: "One minute before start gun goes, Sir Segrave!"

Overboard went the lemon squash, the engine was started, and with a splutter and a roar *Miss England I* dived for the starting buoy, where her German rival was already waiting.

Suddenly the great motor stopped. The little auxiliary engine which was used to start the enormous power unit had not had sufficient time in which to do its work. There was a sudden splutter and the motor ceased. *Miss England I* lay useless and idle at the starting buoy.

"Bang!" went the starting gun. With a roar of her engines the German boat shot off the mark in a cloud of spray. Segrave looked at her wryly. He almost decided to give up. With such a start, it would be next to impossible to catch her, even if the engine started. Regretfully, he ran *Miss England I* back to the landing stage.

"Go on, Henry. Have another crack at it! You may catch her yet," said Mr. Scott Paine.

"Right you are," said "Henry", and dived at the starting motor of his boat. Seven minutes of hard and perspiring work brought a sudden answering roar from the engine and *Miss England I* shot away from the landing stage, flashed past the starting buoy, and, kicking up a mountain of water behind her, raced off down the long lake in hot pursuit of her rival.

He was ten minutes late, and the German boat was far ahead. Nevertheless, on the third lap, the driver of the German boat heard a sudden menacing drone coming up the long miles of the lake behind him, and, looking over his shoulder for a moment, saw the dreaded English driver shooting up on his tail, his boat half out of the water, and a wash like that of a liner winnowing out behind him. A sudden bellow of engines, and *Miss England I* shot past and took the lead. Yard by yard she forged ahead. The German boat, straining every last pound of its energy, was chasing this amazing young man at the full output of its engines.

The crowds watching on the lake shore cheered and cheered again with excitement. This was a race worth seeing. Suddenly, a gasp of horror went up from the thousands of onlookers, a gasp that went like a sigh across the lake. Far ahead, the skipper of a motor-yacht, seeing *Miss England I*

shooting towards him, a tiny white speck in the distance, had thought that there was room enough for him to go about directly in the line of her course. It was a matter of seconds, rather than minutes. *Miss England I* was on him in a roar of engines, a cloud of spray, and the terrified yacht skipper saw, for one brief moment, a hurtling white object shoot past his bows, missing him by a few feet only.

Sir Henry had swerved dangerously, at the risk of overturning, and by superb steersmanship had escaped certain death. He passed the winning post a quarter of a lap ahead of his rival.

He won all five heats and thereby carried off the championship, covering one circuit of the course at a speed of no less than 74.3 miles an hour—a far higher speed than the average usually put up by motor cars in some of the great European races. On water, it is not only above the average, but absolutely astonishing.

The crowd, estimated at 50,000 people, went wild with delight over this young man with the imperturbable manner, the almost bald head and piercing blue-grey eyes. "*Hoch!* Segrave!" went up in a great shout as he stepped rather shyly ashore. The band struck up the National Anthem of Britain, and hats and handkerchiefs alike were thrown in the air as the great crowd cheered and

cheered again the Englishman who had carried off their national championship.

That meeting was also noticeable for the fact that another Englishman, a Mr. Bomford, and his mechanic, the Hon. Jack Leith, swept before them all the premier awards for outboard motor boats, with a little boat called *Seahopper III*, which they had constructed for only £100. These two sportsmen had brought their little boat behind their car on a trailer all the way from the Belgium Coast to Potsdam. They met with incredible difficulties and obstacles on the way, but they arrived just in time for the races—and won.

Three weeks later, Segrave was motor boating in England on the Thames. Thousands of Londoners went by train, tube and bus to Chiswick and Hammersmith, where he once again made history on the water.

It had been announced that, by request, he would give an exhibition run on the Thames while the Duke of York's Trophy was being run for, so that those who desired might have the opportunity of seeing *Miss England I* under power. Special permission had to be obtained from the Thames Conservators to allow so fast a boat on the river. He said he was not out for a record as the water was quite unsuitable. What the public did not understand was the very grave danger in such a performance from the floating rubbish. The

water was cleared as well as it could be, but branches, pieces of wood, bottles, broken boxes and such like were to be seen floating down on the current, any one of which would sink the boat if hit at over eighty miles an hour.

In Duke's Meadows at Chiswick stood an enormous loud speaker. The man in charge had focused his glass on the reach of river at Hammersmith, a mile away. Suddenly the loud speaker spoke: "He has turned at Hammersmith. He is approaching the bend. Good Heavens, he is here!"

Round the bend of the river shot a white and green object, sending up fountains of water, roaring like a juggernaut. In a flash it was past. The great crowds caught a fleeting glimpse of a white figure, sitting grim and motionless in the cockpit gripping the steering wheel with steel-like intensity. That was all.

Segrave had broken another record, the British record for water speed, by skimming the water at 89 miles an hour, by far the highest speed ever attained in Great Britain. Among those who watched him were the Duke of York and Commodore Gar Wood. Sir Henry had the honour of taking the Duke of York for a run before breaking the record.

It is worth noting that at this meeting, Britain won the first three places in the race for the *Field*

International Gold Challenge Trophy, presented by Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart., and Mr. Harold Harmsworth. This was won by Mr. J. W. Shillan at the very high speed, for outboard motor boats, of 37.49 miles an hour.

So far, so good. *Miss England I* had won and her driver had shown what she could do. He had put up the motor boat speed record for Great Britain and for Germany. Europe was his next mark, and, after that, a fresh and more decisive contest for the championship of the world. The European championship was due to be run during the Motor Boat Week at Venice, in September, which attracted to the Lido the fastest speed boat pilots in the world. Segrave's principal rival was *Miss America VII*, entered by Gar Wood, and piloted by his brother, Mr. Phil Wood. The Week really resolved itself into a duel for supremacy between these two.

Let us take the mile speed record first. Competitors were allowed to compete on one of two days, either the Thursday or the Saturday. Segrave agreed with Phil Wood to run on the Thursday morning. He started at 9 o'clock, and by 25 minutes to 10, Segrave had gone over the full course 11 times, obtaining an average speed of 92.8 miles per hour and a maximum speed of 93.45 miles an hour.

Mr. Wood brought out his boat on the following

Saturday morning. He was out by 9 o'clock and did a mile run at between 80 and 89 miles an hour. Thereupon the pilot notified the timekeeper that he was satisfied with the performances of his boat and would go all out for the record. Four times *Miss America VII* roared up and down the course. On the fifth run she stopped half-way. After a few minutes she started again. Finally, she came shoreward.

Mr. Wood announced that conditions were not sufficiently satisfactory for him to go on. He therefore withdrew. His average speed was announced at 90.01 m.p.h. with a maximum of 91.24 m.p.h. Once again Segrave had beaten the best that Commodore Gar Wood could produce. For doing so, he was awarded the Prince of Piedmont's Cup. This, however, was not enough. He was not likely to be satisfied with a margin of success which represented only a mile or so per hour.

The same afternoon a race took place for Count Volpi's Cup. The race was timed to start at 4 o'clock. The Crown Prince of Italy was also due to arrive at that hour. The result was incredible confusion and uproar. Guns went off, trumpets were blown, drums were beaten, men shouted, women screamed, and police and soldiers ran hither and thither. There was so much indiscriminate firing that no one was to

know the starting gun from a casual rifle shot.

It is scarcely surprising that, when the starting gun was actually fired, Segrave was so thoroughly muddled, that he was not only not ready to begin, but *Miss England I* was actually facing in the wrong direction!

Miss America VII was first across the line, followed by *Miss America V*, with Segrave next. He passed *Miss America V* within the first 300 yards, and about 100 yards short of the first turn, he opened the throttle and shot forward at more than 90 miles an hour, passing *Miss America VII* in a whirlwind of spray and flying water.

Just as he had passed her, and had cornered at the incredible speed in which he specialized, a most amazing thing happened—*Miss America VII* shot 15 feet high out of the water. She had caught the wash of Segrave's boat at a wrong angle. She came down level, hitting the sea with a tremendous smack, and broke her back in half. Mr. Phil Wood was shot out on one side and the mechanic on the other. The boat foundered and sank. Speed boats dashed out from shore and collected the two men. They were rushed to hospital, neither seriously injured, but both half-drowned.

Meanwhile, *Miss England I*, and her pilot all unconscious of the accident, was roaring down the

SIR HENRY'S "SEGRAVE METEOR" AEROPLANE
Note the perfect stream lining

sea far in the distance, all out to win the race. There was no difficulty about beating it. Segrave said afterwards that he was puzzled at the time by his mechanic, Captain P. J. Allardice, who, unable to make his voice heard above the thunder of the engine, kept pointing to the bottom of the boat in an attempt to signal that their chief rival had sunk. Segrave misunderstood him, and thought that he meant that something was wrong with *Miss England I* and that she was about to sink.

"I made up my mind," he said afterwards, "that if the bottom was broken, or anything else was about to pack up, it was no use stopping, so we would go on."

On the next lap round he realized, of course, that an accident had occurred and swerved in towards the shore to see if he could be of any use. Realizing that both men had been saved, he continued the course, went on, and finished. This delay explains why *Miss England I* finished the race at what Segrave regarded as a low average speed.

When he got back to his hotel, Lady Segrave looked up and said :

"What happened, de Hane ?"

"Oh, we won," he replied casually.

"Where are the others ?" she asked.

"Oh, they're in hospital," he replied. "Where's my hat ? I'm off to see them."

That was the way in which he treated his victory. His main concern was not that he had won, but that his rivals had been injured. The next thing to do was to find out if he could help.

CHAPTER XVII

The Prelude to Disaster—"Miss England II"—
The Tragedy of Windermere—
"Segrave is Dead".

SEGRAVE had no sooner returned to England than he decided again to attempt the world's mile speed record on water, with a boat of far greater horse-power than *Miss England I.* His tests, trials and records with her, had shown that, excellent though she was, she would not beat Commodore Gar Wood's 2,400 h.p. boat by that ample margin which Segrave always regarded as the only real criterion of success. He had not been back long, therefore, before a new boat was in process of design and, shortly afterwards, of building.

The American record then stood at 93.12 miles an hour. Segrave planned to drive a new boat, developing 4,000 h.p. and capable of at least 100, and probably 120 miles an hour. He wanted to be the first man to do 100 miles an hour on water, but at the same time he wanted to beat the American record by at least 25 miles an hour. Already something like a quarter of a million pounds had been spent by Great Britain in vain efforts to wrest the world's championship from America. Segrave

decided on a grand attack, which would leave nothing to chance, except the driver's hope of living.

The boat was designed by Mr. Fred Cooper, the young British engineer, who had been partly responsible for the design of *Miss England I.* The new boat was to be christened *Miss England II.* She was built in a walled-in enclosure, in a shipyard at Cowes, and the moment the engines arrived, a guard was mounted over them day and night. No battleship could have been built under greater, or more jealously guarded, conditions of secrecy.

The boat was to be only 38 feet in length with a 9 feet beam, into which narrow space was crammed no less than 4,000 h.p.—a terrifying mechanical output of force and power to be controlled by the two hands of one man. It was like cramming a bomb into an eggshell with a shoe-horn.

But most amazing of all in this astonishing make-up of power was the propeller. It was so small that it would have gone into a woman's shopping bag. Disaster was prophesied for this propeller. It was said that it would either revolve the boat itself—a case of the tail wagging the dog—or that its unheard-of number of revolutions, no less than 12,500 a minute, would either wreck the boat or create a vacuum in the water.

Miss England II was fitted with a stem of stain-

less steel, so sharp that a man could cut his hand with it. The whole craft was white, small and terrifyingly powerful—an experiment as daring in design, as new in conception, as capable of infinite possibilities, as ever had been the 1,000 h.p. Sunbeam car, or the Golden Arrow.

This amazing boat was designed to shoot through the air like a bullet, just taking the water here and there and then leaping ahead, from the fresh impetus given by the colossal power of its engines. The whole point was that each time the boat touched the water, it must hit it in a horizontal position, otherwise it would have been torn to pieces by the stresses set up. In other words, it was almost entirely a problem of balance—one which had never before been so daringly tackled in marine engineering.

Early in June of this year, the white boat that was to make history was sent north to Lake Windermere. That long and lovely lake, set amid the everlasting hills of England's most majestic countryside, had been chosen by Segrave as the place where he intended to show the world, and America in particular, that this country could not only build boats to beat the record, but also provide a place to do it on.

The history of that attempt is short in the measure of time, but long in the drama of its hourly incident. It is one of the most tragic

chapters in the whole story of British pioneer work and adventure.

On Tuesday, June 11th, Segrave took his seat in the cockpit of the boat and, with a sudden bellow of sound, kicking up a mountain of water, shot over the lake on a trial run in the light of the evening sun. The boat went out over the mile and returned. There were no timekeepers, but both Segrave and those who saw him were confident that he had travelled at over 100 miles an hour on water—the first man to do so. As the boat came shooting back over the lake, a far-away, silvery-grey dot in the lessening daylight, a column of flame was suddenly seen to shoot skyward from her. The distant roar of the engine ceased. There was silence. Sir Henry's auxiliary speed boat, *Miss London*, shot out from the shore, and presently returned, towing *Miss England II.* Crowds had gathered to see them come in.

Sir Henry, clad in grey trousers, a jersey and shoes, was standing on the bows, his bald head gleaming in the setting sun, guiding the boat into its "cradle". He explained that a blade had snapped off the propeller, and this had caused the engines to race and the flames to leap up. Nevertheless, although travelling at only five-eighths of her available power, he felt certain that she had eclipsed the 100 mile an hour figure.

That, as a matter of fact, was the third occasion

on which his propeller had failed him. It was the third time the metal had either snapped or shown signs of weakening. Each time he ran a grave risk. There was the risk that the blade, as it snapped, might have cut clean through the bottom. It is not too much to say that had those propellers been more trustworthy, had they fulfilled their function without breaking, Sir Henry Segrave would probably be alive and with us to-day.

As it was, he had to wait until a fresh propeller arrived. The metal in the old one had been proved to be only 60 per cent. efficient. He, therefore, ordered two fresh propellers from a different firm. They finally arrived.

On June 13th, this year, Sir Henry Segrave climbed into the cockpit of his boat, started up her gigantic engines, and roared away up Lake Windermere, in front of the fascinated eyes of thousands of onlookers. The boat was going perfectly, her 4,000 h.p. engines drumming in smooth harmony. Once, twice, she covered the course, a white roaring blur that sped over the lake surface with a mountain of white water in its wake.

At the end of the second run the boat swung round and came once more up the course for the third and last time. She had done 96.41 miles an hour on the first run, and 101.11 miles per hour on the second, both officially timed and recorded,

giving a mean speed, and a world's record, of 98.76 m.p.h. Segrave had already achieved his second life's ambition—to be the first man to travel at an official speed of over 100 miles an hour on water. But he knew the boat was capable of more. And this time he had confidence in his propeller.

One more run and he would touch that 120 miles an hour which he had set himself to do. The boat seemed to gather additional speed. It leapt forward like a white flying fish. The drone of the engine rose to an enveloping blast of sound. Suddenly, there came the end.

Miss England II appeared to fly into the air before disappearing in a sea of foam.

A moment before she had been a poem of speed, graceful as a skimming swallow, the fastest boat that man had ever seen. A second later, the beauty was tragedy.

For a few seconds her engines raced under the water. Then little blue whorls of smoke arose. Then silence.

The surface of the lake broke. A white-overalled figure appeared struggling feebly on the surface. A bald head gleamed.

"Thank God, it's Segrave!" went up a whisper from a score of throats. Mr. King, a Windermere man, saw him first. He dived in, fully clothed, from a launch which raced to the spot, and swam

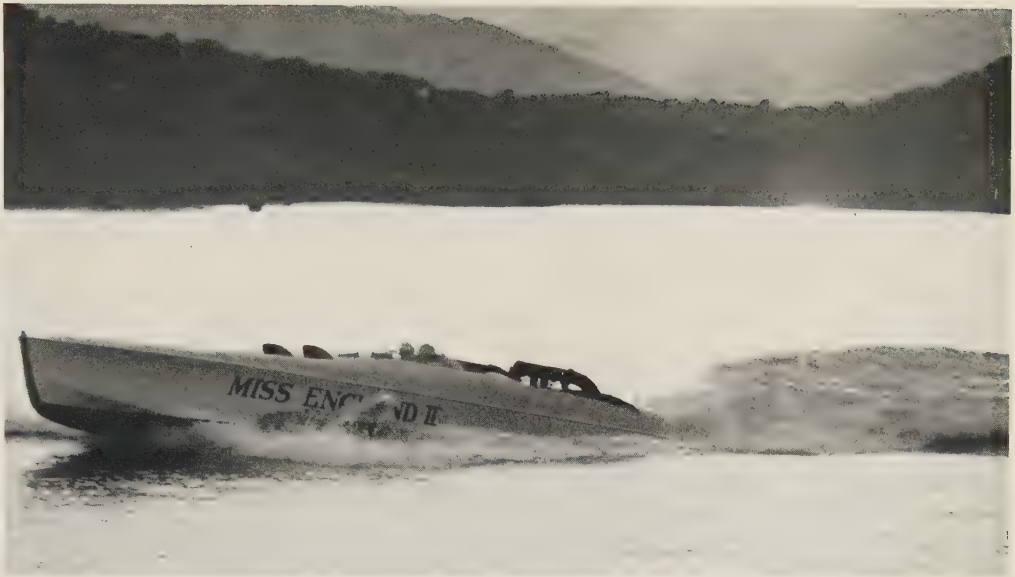


Photo *Daily Mail*

ON THE WATERS OF WINDERMERE

to the pathetic figure in the water. He supported him until he was taken aboard from the waters he had conquered.

He was quite conscious, and his first thought was for his companions.

"How are the lads ?" he asked.

A moment later another white figure bobbed to the surface and was rescued. It was Chief-Engineer Wilcocks. His mechanic, Mr. Halliwell, did not appear.

There was a call for a doctor which was answered by Doctor Holroyd, of Harrogate, who happened to be quite near, and immediately came aboard and supervised his removal to a private house on the shore, where he was quickly joined by two other doctors, who did everything for him that was possible.

His thigh was broken in two places, and rib after rib was shattered. A few hours later he died.

A man who knew Segrave well wrote in his newspaper the day after that terrible thunderclap of tragedy, which plunged England into mourning : "Again and again Segrave has said to me : 'If I go out, may it be doing something worth while; I do not want to die between the sheets.' "

So ended the life of the most courageous, the most romantic, and certainly the most original,

man that the history of automobile engineering has ever known.

Perhaps it is invidious to say that he was the most courageous of all in a sport or profession, as the case may be, in which all show courage, into which none enter who have no courage. Yet this must be remembered, that Segrave's courage was supreme, in that he was never content with the known and trodden paths.

He lived only to explore the unknown, to achieve the impossible, to dare what seemed inevitable disaster. He was no reckless gambler. His courage was not the courage of bravado. It was cold, deliberate and calculating. He took risks because he wanted to find things out. Even as he planned the everyday steps of his career in sequence of development, like the mounting of a step-ladder, so he took risks because each succeeding risk was one more step forward into the unknown, one step further towards the realization of fresh knowledge.

He was a pioneer in the full sense of the word. He has bequeathed us a legacy of bravery and of true scientific research, which will place his name among the immortals.

Before we leave the tragedy of Windermere it is as well that the public should know the full details of the cause of that terrible disaster.

Photo *Rita Martin*

SIR HENRY SEGRAVE, JUST BEFORE HIS DEATH

When Segrave arrived at Lake Windermere with *Miss England II* he had four propellers with him of different pitches and diameters, so that he might find which would give him the greatest speed.

It must be remembered that never before had a propeller had to turn in the water at a speed of 12,500 revolutions a minute, and that there was no scientific data to help him. In fact, when he suggested that the propeller of *Miss England I*, which he took to America in 1929, on the expedition with the Golden Arrow, was going to turn at 6,500 revolutions a minute, he was laughed at by nearly all the marine engineers. They told him that it was quite impossible.

The specification of these propellers for *Miss England II* called for 60-ton tensile strength metal, but to his absolute consternation three of them, as we have said, gave the most appalling trouble on the first trials, bending and breaking off, exposing the boat to terrible danger.

The fourth was sent off to a metallurgist for analysis, and the steel was found to be very much under specified strength.

He instantly ordered two more from another firm, Messrs. Bamford's, who worked night and day to get them ready, which they did in two days. They explained that they had done their best in the very short time at their disposal, but to

turn out really good work they wanted fourteen days. Nevertheless, they could guarantee that they were of proper strength.

Segrave's car travelled through the night bringing them to Windermere, where they arrived on the morning of the 13th of June. One was made of manganese bronze and the other of the proper 60-ton steel.

The firm explained that the blades would be coarse and thick, as it was a rushed and rather makeshift job, but that no fear need be entertained of their breaking or bending. This firm deserves the greatest credit for doing what they did in so short a time.

Segrave got to work at once with his mechanics and fitted the bronze one first. Haste was most necessary, as the official timekeepers had to leave next morning for the Isle of Man Tourist Trophy Races, and the speed test could only be done that day.

Before starting out, Segrave said that, as he was not absolutely sure of the propeller, he would only go fast enough to just beat the existing world's record. He had expressed the intention of changing the bronze propeller for the steel one after doing two runs, and then letting the boat go all out, though she could not possibly attain the maximum speed of which she was capable until she had a propeller which was properly fined up. But he

THE END

evidently changed his mind when he found she was doing so well.

On the third run, on which she struck the obstruction, she was travelling at a terrific speed. A stop-watch of a timekeeper was pressed at the moment of the disaster and registered 21⅘ths seconds. Later, when the boat had been located and buoyed, exact measurements were taken by the surveyor assisted by others. They took hours over the work and found that the boat had travelled 3,780 feet, or 1,260 yards in 21⅘ths seconds, which works out at the amazing speed of just over 119 *miles per hour*, only a mile short of his ideal of speed.

It is, of course, no official record as the course was not completed, but it goes to show of what speed the boat was capable.

What it would have done with the right propeller can only be conjectured.

We have said already that Segrave intended to design an aeroplane which was to be entered for the next Schneider Cup Trophy Race, with the intention of putting the world's air speed still higher. That ambition had already taken shape in the form of the Segrave Meteor, an aeroplane whose design was almost entirely his own, and expressed entirely his doctrine of speed. Every detail was stream-lined. Wind resistance was reduced to a minimum. One of these days, the

Segrave Meteor of to-day, an almost unknown machine, will be embodied in the crack aeroplane of the future.

We cannot end the life of this remarkable man without paying one final tribute to the woman who gave him unfailing support, unswerving encouragement and undeviating loyalty throughout years of anxiety, terror and suspense, showing a courage that in its way equalled his own.

Lady Segrave has earned, in no small sense, the gratitude and indebtedness of the British nation, even as, during his life, she earned the ungrudging worship and appreciation of her husband.

There is a certain copy of a book, written by Segrave, now in his family library, in which the following passage is inscribed on the flyleaf in his own handwriting :

"Though this book may be dedicated to someone else, it is so dedicated in name only. In reality it has been written to you and for you ; I realize that your part has been the most difficult one to bear, and that you have borne it uncomplainingly for eight years.

"This very fact has been the main contribution to my success and has played the really important part, giving me the necessary confidence to overcome the many difficulties as they arose."

The simple sincerity of that dedication gives us one last clear insight into the character of this simple Englishman, whom success never spoilt, danger never deterred, who died as he had lived —at the height of achievement, in the full harness of work.

ENVOI

PRESS AND OTHER TRIBUTES

PRESS AND OTHER TRIBUTES

THE authors have thought fit to end this life story of one of the most remarkable Englishmen of this century by reprinting some quotations from the many tributes to his memory and the value of his work which appeared in the world's Press. Both here, in America and on the Continent, his death was lamented as an international tragedy. He had made himself loved wherever he was known.

The *Miami Daily News* of America said of him, at the height of his fame : "Typical of his countrymen, regarded as among the world's best sportsmen, Major H. O. D. Segrave, British annihilator of space on land and sea, won not only the international race for speed boats at Miami, but he captured the heart of America."

That was but one of the many tributes paid him while he lived. Ten times as many were written and spoken after he had died. The memorial service held for him in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, was one of the most impressive held there for years. It was attended by statesmen, soldiers, captains of industry, pioneers of the Empire, editors of great newspapers, policemen, mechanics and clerks ; in short by a microcosm of that great world whose heart he had captured and held.

From a Daytona Newspaper

Major Sir Henry Segrave, charming, popular, intrepid, who drove 231 miles an hour on Daytona Beach sands and then calmly called London on the long distance telephone, was killed yesterday going 100 miles an hour in a motor-boat.

His wife, the story goes, had urged him to substitute boat racing for auto racing because she regarded it as less dangerous. Who, after all, knows what is dangerous? There is danger in stepping into a bath, in crossing the street, in lighting a gas stove. A great Insurance Company recently divulged that there are more accidents in the home than in industry, and an absurdly large part of these accidents have to do with climbing up and down stairs.

Someone has said that life is not worth living unless it is lived dangerously. That is probably not true for most persons, but for one man in a thousand it is true. To men like Segrave, life without danger is intolerable.

Danger, any insurance man will tell you, always represents some mathematical hazard, whether or not computable. Every man who steps into a speed car or a speed boat takes just a certain number of chances. Segrave, not taking those chances, would not have been Segrave. He lost

—and those millions of persons who admire him, from small boys who boast their love of adventure, to old ladies who won't admit it, have lost with him.

In the tragedy of Segrave's untimely end there is a bitter element of frustration, in spite of his accomplishments. The rumour is, and there is reason to believe it, that Sir Henry, in spite of his wife's fears, hoped some day soon to hold to his credit three great super-victories over the elements. He wanted to be king of speed, on land, on water, and in the air. Holding the automobile record he captured the motor boat record a few seconds before his death. Finally, it was his ambition, according to rumour, to capture the airplane speed record. Then, perhaps, he wouldn't so much have minded.

Segrave meant a lot to Daytona Beach. His personality engraved itself deeply upon the community. It is no disparagement to the others, to say that he was the most popular racer who ever came to this city. And he earned his popularity. Not only did he deliver the goods, in the way of a world's record, but he displayed here a marvellous sense of showmanship and capacity for organization. Segrave, and no other man, really put on the races here in 1929, and they went like clockwork. Mechanics and officials loved to work for and with him, took his orders as naturally as though they were serving under him in the Army.

He needed no manager, no publicity agent, no "handling".

Daytona Beach fell hard for Segrave; America put him among her foremost sporting heroes; but England . . . Englishmen say we cannot realize over here what Segrave meant to England. The reception he got there in 1929 was no mere return of a successful sporting championship, which indeed, technically, was all it was. It was the triumph of a conqueror, which, indeed in a larger sense, it actually was. The knighting of Segrave was not in the spirit of a king rewarding a successful gladiator, but a recognition of victory over time and over friction, the two great adversaries with whom mankind is born to wrestle.

May he rest in peace, this brave Britisher whom, in life, a ceaseless restlessness inspired to do undone feats of speed.

Daytona Beach, knowing that he only awaited the bettering of his record here to return again, and once more stagger the whole of America, as he did twice before, by showing what a gap he could put between himself and any other man on earth, would have welcomed him with open arms. It wishes him God-speed and a "good beach" wherever his journey lies.

An amusing paragraph appeared in a Southampton paper in February, 1930, which reads as follows:

"That the great are often the most modest and unassuming of men was proved to a Southampton hire-service chauffeur recently.

"He was told by his manager that there was a man who wanted to be driven to London, and he was to pick him up at a certain place in the vicinity of the Docks.

"When the car arrived the prospective 'fare' was in a fever of impatience. 'I must be in Berkeley Square by twenty minutes past six. Do you think you can do it ?'

"The chauffeur said he thought he could manage the journey in the time, although it was 4.20. His car was 30 h.p. and capable of over 70 m.p.h. When passing through Winchester the traveller became lonely, so he decided to sit beside the driver, but he would not allow him to stop the car while he changed seats. 'I'm in too much of a hurry,' he said, 'but I'll climb through the window.'

"Before the chauffeur had time to protest his fare had done the acrobatic trick and was beside him.

"As the car plunged on through the darkness, passing all other traffic, the passenger remarked conversationally : 'Of course I'm used to driving rather faster cars than this one.' The driver was astounded at the words, because he had been thinking all the time that the speed was causing him considerable apprehension.

"He did not understand the full purport of those words, however, until the car pulled up in Berkeley Square punctually on time.

" 'You drove splendidly, and I'm very grateful,' said the passenger, pressing a note and his visiting card into the hand of the driver.

"The card bore the following name : Major Sir Henry Segrave !"

Dublin Evening News

SIR HENRY SEGRAVE

R.I.P.

Stilled is the bravest heart that ever beat,
Quiet the soul that never knew defeat ;
Smiling and cool you faced the eyes of Death
For England's honour gave you latest breath.

Ireland will mourn the loss of her great son,
Take pride and glory in the triumphs won ;
Segrave, clean sportsman, bravest of the brave,
Your victories will live beyond the grave.

P. O. P.

A Tribute from Wolverhampton Technical College

Last year Segrave came amongst us. Many of us spoke to him and took his hand. No longer a romantic remote figure, he became our friend. We loved his daring, and we recognized the ardent and original mind that prompted his attempts. We loved his modesty and his friendliness. We loved his patriotism that would not permit his own country to be belittled in speech or outdone in action, and could yet acknowledge with true appreciation what was being done in other lands.

We believe that Segrave's actual records will stand long. His achievement in practically doubling speeds in one short lifetime can never again be approached. His service to his country in days of difficulty and doubt stands alone.

Motor Boating

New York.

No person has ever done more in the scientific development of speed craft than Major Segrave.

Although he had been interested in speed boats for less than two years, yet the discoveries which

he had made and applied to fast boats in this short time were of greater importance than anything ever before developed. The short period of time in which he has been interested in motor craft, has been fully as successful as his record on land. In his boat, *Miss England I*, he defeated Gar Wood's *Miss America VII* in Italy last year.

Last year, after his run over the sands at Daytona Beach, he said these prophetic words :

"Man's precarious ventures in terrific speed are nearing the point where the laws of Nature will say finally : 'Thus far and no farther.' "

. . . . .

By his death the world loses a true sportsman, a cool brave English gentleman, one of those daring men who in each generation add something fine and enduring to the glory of sportsmanship. He was loved by every American yachtsman who knew him.

Auto

Gentleman, sportsman and true patriot, with success attending everything ventured. Triumph in life and in death. Truly this country, nay, the whole world, has suffered an immense loss with the passing of so great a personality.

How great a pioneer, and how splendid an example for those left to carry on the ever-necessary work of development and improvement.

Segrave, a born leader of men, loved by all who knew him, and idolized nationally and internationally, fearless but fair, and, as those who knew him will endorse, ready to give assistance, even to his rivals.

The Main Sheet

SEGRAVE

Canada.

When *Miss England II* betrayed her proud pilot, and sent him to his death, she deprived Britain of the boldest and most redoubtable challenger of America's supremacy in the power craft field.

Before he died Major Segrave happily knew that he had once more written his name indelibly into the chronicles of clean sport.

His heart was set upon the recovery of the Harmsworth Trophy. The possibility—shall we say the probability—that America's colours were to dip to this stout-hearted Englishman, was everywhere recognized.

Would that he had been spared to be here, the cup of defeat would now be sweet from his hands,

and the Harmsworth Trophy a more cherished emblem of International comity and sportsmanship, for his successful conquest of it. Indeed, in a very real sense it becomes a memorial to him, even though it remain with us.

The Aeroplane

By the death of Sir Henry Segrave, British Aviation has suffered the worst blow that it has had for many years. As everybody who is at all intimately concerned with aviation knows, his services as Technical Adviser had been acquired recently by a very powerful financial group which is interesting itself in the Aircraft industry.

The first fruit of his advice has just appeared in the "Segrave Meteor" which, without departing in any way from thoroughly well-known aerodynamic and mechanical practice, is to all intents and purposes a new type of aeroplane of precisely the kind which, in larger or smaller sizes, is definitely wanted.

His natural ability enabled him to foresee the commercial prospects of aircraft of different kinds, and with such a qualification, there is no telling what might have been the outcome of his association with the great financial powers by which he was employed.

The pity is that those who scoffed at the idea of

Henry Segrave setting up as Technical Adviser on air affairs will never be taught the lesson which would come to them if he had been allowed to live, and to fulfil the plans which he had conceived. Perhaps he was taken from us to prevent us from progressing more quickly than would have been good for us.

Perhaps one of Henry Segrave's greatest qualities was that, in spite of all his great successes and his immense and well-deserved popularity, his manner towards his early friends never altered. He had supremely that quality of good breeding, the ability to "stand corn"—his head was never turned by success.

In him England has lost a potentially great man.

Liverpool Echo

The sacrifice of Sir Henry Segrave was in high endeavour. He needed neither money nor eminence. So he dared and died. His loss is not merely that of a brave man; he was an asset of the Empire. He was a man of imagination, of inventiveness, he had mechanical knowledge and understanding.

In these dolorous days, with weak-kneed depressionists all too numerous, let us, who have faith and hope, say that there is nothing wrong with England as long as she has pioneers like Segrave.

Airways

By the death of Sir Henry Segrave the British Empire lost one of its most famous ambassadors, and British Aviation a very gifted enthusiast.

Those who question the value of speed records on land, sea and in the air forget that the "Golden Arrow" and the two *Miss Englands* involved an enormous amount of research work—some of it fundamental in character—which has increased the sum of human knowledge, and is of abiding value.

The paper which Captain Irving read on the technical aspects of the design of the "Golden Arrow" before the Institution of Automobile Engineers this year is a permanent memorial to the importance of Segrave's work, and aviation, the old love to which he had returned to devote his undoubted genius, is a grievous loser by his death.

Autocar

BRITAIN'S DEBT TO A VERY GALLANT GENTLEMAN

Sir Henry Segrave has endeared himself not only to the British public, but also to the Americans, and to the great sport-loving community on the

Continent of Europe; indeed, throughout the world he was esteemed by all for what he had done, and by those who knew him, for the modest, unassuming manner in which he achieved his triumphs, and wore the laurels he so well deserved.

The spirit of true sportsmanship which animated Sir Henry Segrave is alive in others, there can be no doubt; to those others his life and the swift death which came to him at the very moment of his triumph will prove incentives to follow on the road he trod so bravely and so well.

. . . . .

De Hane is dead and Britain has lost her modern Drake.

Henry O'Neil de Hane Segrave was only thirty-three, but in that short lifetime he had achieved his life's ambitions, and made himself the hero of a century. He set before his eyes the ideal of travelling faster than any other man on land and water, and he did both.

Segrave's death is a heavy loss to England, and the Empire. He had become an inspiration to a renascent England recovering slowly from the grievous wounds of the World War.

He carried the Flag of unconquerable Britain across the Waters. He was the idol of young England, which attached itself to his career with ardent enthusiasm, and the highest hopes.

Pride in the splendid achievements of Sir Henry Segrave will remain a permanent possession of the British people, long after the shock of his tragic and untimely end has passed away. For a high ideal he put everything to the hazard; he was comforted in his last moments by the knowledge that his patriotic ambition was achieved.

Sir Henry Segrave set himself to prove that British enterprise, and British machinery, are unexcelled in the World—an immense service to national industry. And he gave an example to Youth, an example of iron resolution, lofty endeavour and undaunted courage.

While we deplore his death, we are his debtors for the invincible efforts he made to bring honour upon the name of his grateful country.

Tall, upstanding, handsome; alertness and youthful vigour in all his movements; with a playful gravity in his grey-blue eyes, Segrave remained a boy at heart—too young to die.

We, his fellow countrymen, salute the dead.

Hull Daily Mail

The Passing of Sir Henry Segrave after a moment of such awe-inspiring triumph as he achieved on Lake Windermere, sends a pang through the heart of the world.

Never were pride, glory and the tomb allied in a more touching conjuncture. His last words were entirely worthy of a man who, rightly, was the shining and effulgent hero to the youth of to-day throughout civilization.

His death came in the zenith of his fame. He would not have wished it otherwise, and he has made the supreme contribution to the contest of man over the elemental forces.

There can be no better epitaph for him than Bayard's proud motto :

"Without fear, and without reproach."

Yorkshire Post

THIS WAS A MAN

Sir Henry stood out as the greatest speed champion that has ever appeared in history. Britain loses a champion who did more perhaps than has yet been recognized to glorify her name.

We place Sir Henry among those Britons whom their Countrymen delight to honour, who have willingly risked their lives to enhance the prestige of their country.

In the prime of life, with success, honour, and acclamation won, Sir Henry might have retired from the field of active endeavour, but he chose to continue the fight, and die in action.

Wolverhampton Express and Star

He had achieved his ambitions and in the moment of consummation, without twilight of fading powers, or feeble years in which a new age could pass him by and forget, he flashed past the post of Death into whatever Elysian fields of victory await the brave and the true.

Where he was *best known* he was *most* honoured. He was a true knight, who sought only honour in his daring, and England in her grief is proud of him.

The Yachtsman and Motor Boating

He it was who showed the World that Britain could lead with the highest speed ever attained in Land locomotion, and at the pace which none but a few racing aeroplanes could reach even to-day.

Even though Segrave is dead, his bravery gleams like a brilliant star in the firmament, the lustre of which will for long remain undimmed.

Newcastle Evening World

Segrave the peerless has gone, leaving this Country enriched by his life, even unto the hour of his passing.

In our mourning let us rejoice that he went out like a Greek hero, full of vigour, courage, and at the noontide of his glory.

Segrave was intensely patriotic in the best and most enduring sense. He wanted England to lead the World industrially, and no single man did more than he to enhance the prestige of British Engines.

The workmen loved him because of his attitude towards them. He respected them. He knew his life was in their hands. His fame was built on their prowess, and he never forgot them.

Segrave's eyes had that far-away look of a man who sees clearly a long way ahead.

Windermere was a suitable setting for the passing of this great man. In beautiful form the Lake and the Mountains represent the elements against which he battled so long and so triumphantly.

Sunday Referee

Nobody can view Sir Henry's life in perspective without responding to the inherent drama and majesty of it. His heroic belief that the machines which men make can be controlled by men's hands and brains, was the law of his life, and in his unflinching obedience to it the dead hero was true to a destiny that the World in its sorrow may overlook.

The complete absence of personal gain invests his life and end with an almost legendary quality; but the mark of the true pioneer in human progress has always been the self-sacrificing response to the urge of an inscrutable inspiration.

The Country could ill afford to spare Sir Henry, but there is comfort in the thought that he has written a glorious page in the history of his Country, and that his example will breed and nurture men of his own noble type.

Huddersfield Daily Examiner

A Great Gentleman

Segrave was a true Knight of the twentieth century, and it is not without significance that one of the last pictures taken of him shows him with his equipment—corresponding to the panoply of the Knights of old—being buckled on by his comrades before they set out on the fateful journey.

Amidst the nauseating publicity which spoils so much of the achievement of to-day, and which gives to the meretricious and unworthy a value it ought never to possess, Segrave remained what he was, by tradition and instinct—a great gentleman, worthy to rank with the most gallant of our race.

Cornish Evening Tidings

He was a man of whom it could be truly said that he had not an enemy. His workmen adored him. His mechanics regarded him as almost a god—so far could he cultivate the devotion of those around him.

His passing is an irretrievable loss to motoring for he was engaged on many ideas for the improvement of the motor engine both on land and water. To him speed was but a means to an end—the improvement of the engine.

Therein lies the loss to the world, as well as of the passing of a delightful personality—as great a loss as when Charlie Rolls fell those fatal sixty feet. The two heroes will have a high place in the national Valhalla.

The Graphic

Segrave was of his own choice a pioneer. At the age of thirty-three he possessed most of what life has to offer: Fame, popularity, happiness, comfort. He had established two World's records.

He had left his mark on Motor engineering and Motor body work. And he had received an accolade from Youth, for as plain "Segrave" without title or qualifying Christian name, he was the Hero of every schoolboy.

His generation knows him as a maker of records. To-day he is spoken of as one with compelling personality, and the gift of getting things done. Boys worship him as the ideal of a brave man. But another generation may remember his name—it will be written on the shipyards that are "modern" when we are not.

The Safe Driver

Starting at the bottom of the ladder of achievement he climbed steadily and with a willing hand to help others. His friends will ever remember a charming personality of infinite courage and whimsical humour, devoted to an ideal—his eyes on the stars.

We shall not see his like again. In mourning him we, who knew him so well, pay our homage to her whose inflexible courage and single-hearted devotion has long been the admiration of us all.

The Motor Boat

For although Sir Henry's fame in the minds of most people lay chiefly in his accomplishments with cars, it is possible that what he has done for Motor boating, and certainly for British Motor boating, will rank of greater value in the end than his speed records on land.

In the short period of eighteen months during which Segrave had taken to Motor boating, through his genius for speed, he had raised the prestige of British Motor boating to a point it has not enjoyed since the War.

What his achievements have meant to his country has yet to be fully realized. In the eyes of the World the United Kingdom has become the Country in which the greatest advancement in the design of Motor boats is to be found ; and for this Segrave is mainly responsible. Segrave's work has already proved of considerable value and has thrown new light on problems which have hitherto remained obscure.

In his own field he stood completely alone, possessed of a unique combination of characteristics, which enabled him to succeed, with a deceptive ease, in what he set out to do.

In Motor boating his loss is irreparable, and there is apparently none to take his place.

Armchair Science

An Appreciation by Lt.-Col. Moore-Brabazon

As he competed abroad, up against men who strove to win at all costs, he was the perfect representative of this Country; he would never take an unfair advantage; he would always run straight, but would always make the most of any apparatus of which he was in charge.

One cannot refer to his death without paying a word of tribute also to his astonishing power of speech. Segrave was a born orator, his speeches at dinners given after his remarkable performances have been models of what such speeches should be. Never vainglorious, never boastful, they were full of interest. I only wish some of them could have been kept to be published in book form; they would have been of permanent value.

Now he has gone and we in this Country lose a champion we can ill spare. All we can comfort ourselves with is the fact that we had, for all too short a time, Henry O'Neil de Hane Segrave.